

## Tilburg University

### Appreciative inquiry makes research future forming

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# **Appreciative Inquiry makes Research Future Forming**

**J.W. Otte**



# **Appreciative Inquiry Makes Research Future Forming**

Proefschrift ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor aan Tilburg University op  
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geboren op 21 november 1962  
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*This research is dedicated to the most important people in my life  
Ivo, my partner in life, the one that helps me built bridges  
My Appreciative Inquiry family, with whom building bridges is so easy  
My Aikido family, who show me how strong bridges can be*

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## Abstract

Gergen's invitation to discuss research in a future forming direction has been the inspiration for this Ph.D. research. Gergen talks about the 'science wars' of recent decades that have largely subsided, giving way to what might be viewed as a condition of reflective pragmatism. Gergen offers us a new metaphor, one that defines the researcher in terms of world making. The future forming orientation of research can be the answer to the rapid fluctuations in social life. Social life, with its fast changing elements is asking for different ways of handling it. Perhaps it is asking for new words, a new language, or a new link between worlds.

I live in separate worlds. My head, or my mind, lives in the promising alternative for our traditional practices of research. My mind is fully engaged with Research as Creative Construction in the form of *Appreciative Inquiry*. Drawing from narrative and constructionist ideas, scholars around the world created this practice in which participants collectively determine the optimal course of organizational development.

The other world that I live in, where my feet are is the world of higher education in the Netherlands. I work as an Associate Professor in Relational Research and Organization Transformation at NOVI University of Applied Sciences. There, the part time Bachelor students work mostly in the world of *Information Technology*. I also work as a Research lecturer for other universities of Applied Sciences. The world where my feet are is based in the traditional practices of research. That world is data driven and is often looked at as a place to be corrected and improved through observation.

The third world that I live in, where my *hara* - my belly is, is the world of *aikido*. This Japanese martial art teaches me how to continuously search to enrich my capacities for skillful innovation. Through *aikido*, for me, it is possible to extend the Aristotelian concept of knowledge through *praxis*. In this Ph.D. research I intent to bridge the two worlds of head and feet through the use of the third world - *aikido*.

I intended for *Appreciative Inquiry* to be the center for this dissertation and that is why it has been the method of research. Also in writing this dissertation the same steps or phases used in *Appreciative Inquiry* were used however, these steps were renamed into Defining the inquiry – Discovering the path – Dreaming the future – Designing the future – Delivering the future.



As with all *Appreciative Inquiry*, processes an affirmative topic was chosen. For this inquiry, the affirmative topic was

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No central research question was formed. Instead, the affirmative topic was used as a guiding affirmation during the course of the research much as, one in traditional research would do with a central research question.

During the research process the following questions were guiding the process.

#### *What is Appreciative Inquiry?*

The first question to be answered was about what *Appreciative Inquiry* is. In the -Discovering the path- section, in the literature review, a description of the method is given, and many of the models are described that derived from Cooperrider and Srivasta's first guidelines and these are now used worldwide.

#### *The next question is How can Appreciative Inquiry help form a future forming orientation to research?*

Gergen's description of Research as Creative Construction is the basis for this research. In the -Discovering the path- section, the various directions for organizations, which is called the 'new wave' in organizational development, and which is used in higher education is guiding this research in such a manner that in the -Designing the Future- section the NOVI case is shared where *Appreciative Inquiry* can help to create a vocabulary from which new practices can emerge. The NOVI case is used as an example from which other universities can be inspired. In the Netherlands, at this moment, the search for more opportunity for co-creation in universities is seen in the start of the *New University* and *Rethink University of Amsterdam*.

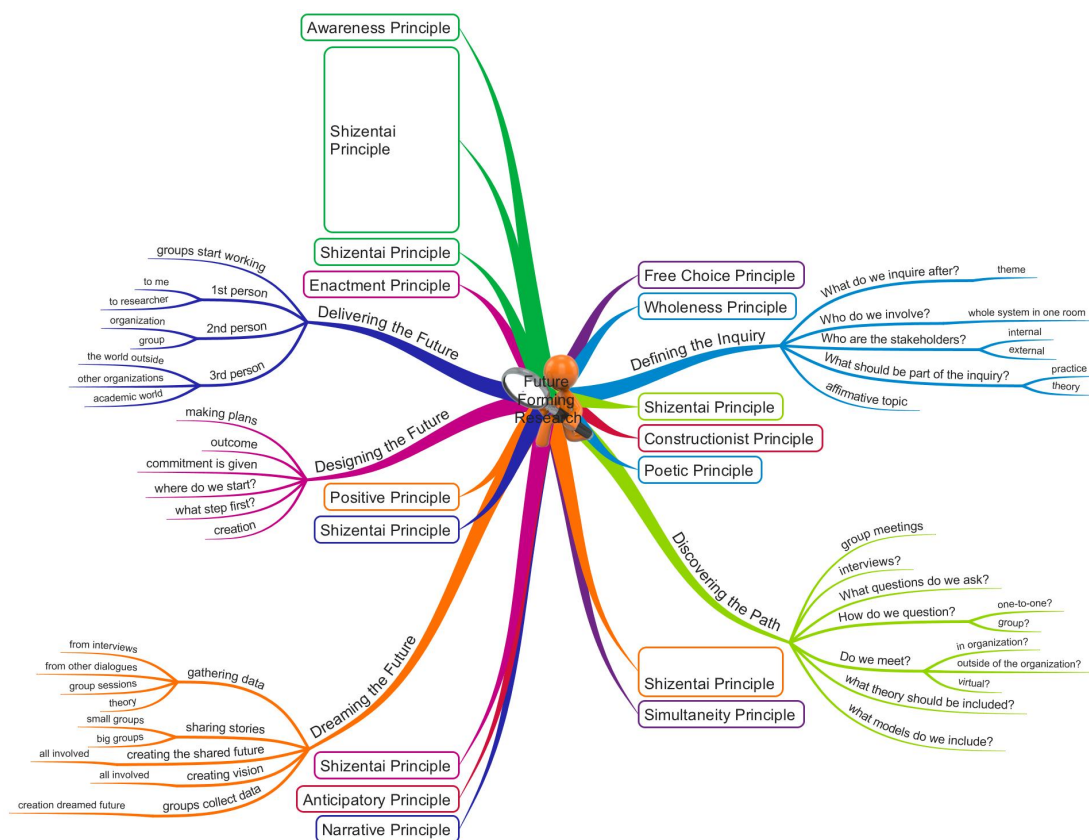
#### *The next question answered is, How can the new principle Shizentai add value?*

In addition to the principles that form *Appreciative Inquiry* a new principle was added, the *Shizentai* principle, which can help link the world of head and the world of feet. The *Shizentai* principle, with its roots in *aikido*, is explained and practice is given.

#### *The next question answered is What is the impact of using Appreciative Inquiry on research?*

During the research 12 people were interviewed. These participants were all researchers that used *Appreciative Inquiry* in their own research. Their stories are shared in the -Dreaming the Future- section of the research. In addition, five Ph.D.'s were asked to share their story on impact.

In the –Delivering the Future- section, research in the first, second and third person is described. In the first person a description of how self-reflection can be introduced to NOVI University of Applied Sciences by using Cooperrider's *Tiniest AI Summit* is given, and the introduction of Kelm's Appreciative Living process is shared to help researchers gaining an appreciative eye. In the second person the NOVI case is showing how the creation of democratization in higher education can be the key to innovation, not only in higher education but also in business. In the third person research an overview was created of what Future Forming Research can look like through the use of a mind-map and a description. Here the new principle, the Shizentai principle is added to show how it can be of value. The mind-map is shared below. The steps shown in the mind-map are the same as those taken throughout this Ph.D.-research.



# 1. Defining the inquiry

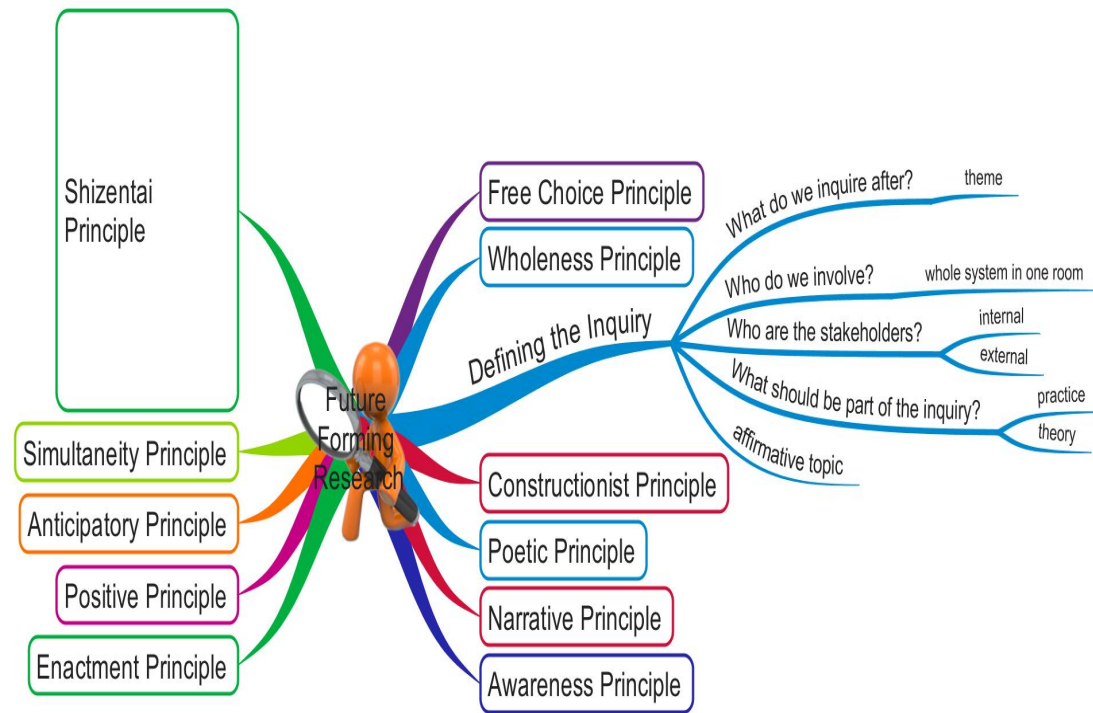


Figure 1: Defining the Inquiry

## Introduction

At the beginning of each of the chapters in this dissertation a mind-map is shared, in which the elements at hand are shown. This section of the research presents an introduction to the inquiry at hand. It shows how I got a start with this Ph.D. research and what steps were taken in order to define the inquiry.

I have been in love with research ever since, as a little girl, I tried to find out why we do what we do! In particular during my Master's program, I was thrilled to work with research at the organization I worked for then, the Dutch Yellow Pages (Gouden Gids) organization. Their Dutch division had been taken over by the Dutch company VNU. I was able to look at the different organizational cultures of companies based in the Netherlands, but formerly owned by the US based ITT organization. I loved doing the interviews with the people working at both organizations. With the help of my supervisor, Dr. Schelte Beltman, the research was turned into a valuable report for both VNU and Gouden Gids. After this project I started wondering about new opportunities in which I could do research. I wanted something different. I was not aware at the time, but I was creating a constructionist worldview in my own thinking and with that, the traditional way of doing research did not feel rewarding enough. I was missing ways on how to include as many stakeholders as possible. Working with students/researchers, in both Bachelor's and Master's degree projects at various universities in the Netherlands, I noticed that most of their research projects were deficit based. In working with *Appreciative Inquiry* (AI), in consultancy, strategic planning, organization development, valuation and research projects, I noticed that these projects are strength based, looking at possibilities rather than looking at problems, looking at opportunities and aspirations rather than threats and weaknesses. Bava (as quoted in (Simon & Chard, 2014), p. 157)) states it in a way that I feel comfortable with: *"I am claiming that all research is made up and inherently emergent thus we need to approach research not only as a planned or designed process but also as a messy, chaotic process with surprises that requires one to improvise during the process. And as research supervisors we need to be able to be responsive, playful and flexible with our students or advisees in the process."* During these processes of inquiry that I was involved in, there were times of messy and chaotic events that lead to surprises for all involved. And it was at these times that I felt most alive.

Through time I decided that working with AI was helping me to work and research in a way that fitted better with who I was. And then, through my work with bachelor and master students at various universities in the Netherlands I discovered I wanted to bring the relational approach to research to these

students, to help them make their research strength based and perhaps, with AI as a research approach, even future forming.

I was looking for a more promising alternative to research. My search was described in Gergen's (2014) award winning article in which he says: "*This conception of a future forming orientation to research opens the way to new aims, practices, ethical deliberations, and reflections*".

Often I feel that I live in separate worlds. My head, or my mind, lives in the promising alternative for our traditional practices of research. My mind is fully engaged with Research as Creative Construction (Gergen, From Mirroring to World-Making: Research as Future Forming, 2014) in the form of AI. From the start of this Ph.D. research, sometime in 2007, while defining the inquiry, the research started out as an inquiry of what the impact of working with AI is on research. Drawing from narrative and constructionist ideas, scholars around the world created this practice in which participants collectively determine the optimal course of organizational development (Gergen, From Mirroring to World-Making: Research as Future Forming, 2014). My search for possibilities to include as many stakeholders as possible lead me to using AI as a method of inquiry.

The other world that I live in, where my feet are is the world of higher education. I work as an Associate Professor in Relational Research and Organization Transformation at NOVI University of Applied Sciences. There, (part time) Bachelor students are adults who are working, most of them in the world of *information technology*, studying to get their degrees. I also work as a Research lecturer for other Universities of Applied Sciences. The world where my feet are is based in the traditional practices of research. That world is data driven and is often looked at as one to be corrected and improved through observation (Gergen, From Mirroring to World-Making: Research as Future Forming, 2014).

A third world that I live in, where my *hara*<sup>1</sup> is, located in the belly of our body - is the world of *aikido*. This Japanese martial art teaches me how to continuously enrich my capacities for skillful innovation. Through *aikido*, it is possible to extend the Aristotelian concept of knowledge through *praxis* (Gergen, 2014). In this Ph.D. research I intent to bridge the world of head and feet through the use of the world of the belly. When I first realized that I wanted to combine my love for AI and *aikido*, I didn't even see the magic of the two names together: AI ki do = *aikido*.

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<sup>1</sup> "Hara is that state in which the individual has found his primal center, and has proven himself by it" – Durckheim, 2004, p.9

Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) developed AI as an action research approach. Action research is an approach where we don't talk **about** others, but talk **with** others. Reason and Bradbury say *"Action research does not start from a desire of changing others 'out there', although it may eventually have that result, rather it starts from an orientation of change 'with' others"* (Reason & Bradbury, 2008, introduction).

Kurt Lewin (1946, p.35, as quoted by Chard in Simon & Chard, 2014, p. 46) who is credited by many with coining the term action research stated that *"The research needed for social practice can best be characterized as research for social management or social engineering. It is a type of action-research, a comparative research on the conditions and effects of various forms of social action, and research leading to social action. Research that produces nothing but books will not suffice."*

In AI, Cooperrider and Srivastva wanted to *"challenge the problem-oriented view of organizing inherent in traditional definitions of action-research, and describe an affirmative form of inquiry uniquely suited for discovering generative theory"* (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987, introduction). Gergen (2014, p.10) talks about a "dramatic illustration" when he is describing AI, "drawing from narrative and constructionist ideas".

In this inquiry AI is used as the research method, and it has been the approach used by the researchers who were interviewed in order to look at what the impact of working with AI was on research. I have carefully selected the NOVI case in this research, because of the large changes that both commercial and non-commercial educators go through at the moment. NOVI is a commercial educator in the Netherlands, providing Bachelor programs for both Business Administration and Information Technology students. Another important reason to include NOVI is that NOVI's students work in organizations where the impact of communication technologies on cultural life are eminently plausible. Technologies like radio, the automobile, mass transportation systems, and mass publishing in early twentieth century, and subsequently adding jet transportation, television, the internet, and the cell phone, help the landscape of human interchange to alter radically (Gergen, 2014). Derksen (2011) says: *"The recognition of the global reach of IT, especially in light of the impact of the global financial crisis, has amplified the necessity to obtain responses from organizations around the globe to understand similarities and difference across geographies. The top 5 applications and technologies vary greatly across the geographies. They are: business intelligence, cloud computing, enterprise resource planning systems, software as a service and collaborative and workflow tools."* Bobbert (2014) writes about business information security maturity and tries to convince IT organizations to work on incident management with regards to cybercrime and data theft through the use of integral management. He claims that when an



organization works on security maturity, more awareness will be created. He calls that Increase Security Awareness.

This world in which the NOVI students work might be a perfect start to introduce AI as a method that can help shape the directions of change and the directions of research.

The dissertation is written along the lines of the phases that are used in AI: Discovery, Dream, Design, and Delivery. For the purpose of this inquiry they are renamed into -Discovering the Path-, -Dreaming the Future-, -Designing the Future- and -Delivering the Future-. The phase of -Defining the Inquiry- is added, to introduce the inquiry. I'm very much aware that the phases are not the 'tool' that makes AI strength-based. To me the strength-based elements are the principles on which AI is built. The steps, or phases do, however, give a structure that is often seen as a good cycle to follow, so as to not forget a step. This structure, which can be seen as part of the more traditional way of doing research is hopefully opening the way to new aims, practices, ethical deliberations and reflections. Gergen (2014, p2) states the same when saying "*it is not my intent to eliminate the longstanding traditions, but to bring into focus new and far-reaching potentials of inquiry*".

In the -Defining the Inquiry- section I share what the inquiry is about, who is involved, and create the affirmative topic and research questions. In the -Discovering the Path- phase of the research twelve people are interviewed, to discover what they see as the impact of working with AI in research. Their stories are shared in the -Dreaming the future- phase. Additionally there are five written narratives regarding the subject 'wondering on impact', with TAOS<sup>2</sup> Ph.D.'s. Their written narratives are also shared in the -Dreaming the future-section. In the -Designing the Future- section the NOVI<sup>3</sup> University of Applied Sciences case is shared, with the stories of two of the Bachelor students who used AI in their research.

In the -Delivering the Future- section, research in the first, second and third person is described. In the first person, a description of how self-reflection can be introduced to NOVI University of Applied Sciences by using Cooperrider's *Tiniest AI Summit* is given, and the introduction of Kelm's Appreciative Living process is shared to help researchers gain an appreciative eye.

In the second person the NOVI case is showing how the creation of democratization in higher education can be the key to innovation in higher education and in business.

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<sup>2</sup> A description of TAOS is given in Attachement A

<sup>3</sup> A description of NOVI is shared in Attachement A.

In the third person research, an overview was created of what Future Forming Research can look like through the use of a mind-map and a description. A new Principle, the *Shizentai* Principle, is added to the AI principles, to show how it can be of value. Below my personal introduction to AI is shared.



## Discovering Appreciative Inquiry

While on the internet, writing in one of LinkedIn groups, a person there explained to me that what I was bringing to the discussion was a particular theory (he mentioned *Appreciative Inquiry*) and that I should look it up, which I subsequently did. In doing so, I discovered a whole new world. AI, with its base in social constructionism gave me a language. I had been searching for words to use to describe another way of working and inquiring. I wanted to work and inquire or research using a strength-based approach and not a deficit based one.

The introduction by David Cooperrider, (Cooperrider's introduction called Strategies for Exceptional Performance in The Appreciative Inquiry Handbook in Dutch, (Masselink, de Jong et al. 2008, 2013, p. introduction)) captured my attention:

*"Imagine settings – businesses, organizations, communities – designed not only to obsessively notice and engage each partner's signature strengths every day, but settings explicitly designed to connect, leverage and magnify the reverberating strengths of the whole, much like a terrific fusion-energy combinations leads to the birth of new stars.*

*Imagine ever further the world thirty years from now and consider the following scenario for the economy: it's a bright-green restorative economy that purifies the air we breathe; it's a system that has eliminated the concept of waste and toxic by-product; extreme poverty has been eradicated through prosperity; it is powered through solar and renewable energy innovations; it is a system that has united the strengths of markets with the power of universal ideals, where positive incentives have been aligned with the long-term social good (thus, it has virtually eliminated 'perverse incentives'); it is a globally inclusive system that respects and replenishes the health of people, diverse communities and the wealth of nature; and it is all built in and through institutions that are widely trusted as positive institutions – workplaces that elevate, magnify, and refract our highest human strengths (wisdom, courage, humanity, compassion, inspiration, creativity, freedom, hope, joy, integrity, love and meaning) into the world."*

In 2008, after working with AI for two years, mostly in strategic planning and consultancy, the above passage drove my curiosity about AI even more. Cooperrider was talking about possibilities, about aspirations and strength that would help the world be a better place. He was talking about my dreams of how I could help clients solve issues in strategic planning, organizational change,

community development, personal/relational transformation, but most of all in research. I started to talk about my dream of using AI in research and realized that talking about it, and not just thinking about it, felt good. It was as if I was becoming addicted to sharing my dream. It was only when reading about social constructionism that I realized that through having conversations about this dream with other people, we were, together, creating the dream. *"Within the constructionist dialogues we find that it is not the individual mind in which knowledge, reason, emotion and morality reside, but in relationships"* (Gergen & Gergen, 2008, p. 161).

From that moment onwards my search for information that would help me create an approach that would make research based on strength, opportunities, aspirations and results, was no longer limited to books and articles I realized that relationships are the place to learn, to create, to work together, to inquire together. That realization showed me that working with AI, with its base in social constructionism, would give me a methodology or approach to do research in a way that fitted best with how I looked at the world, or how I wanted to co-create the world. The realization that in order to work together in research with researchers, I would have to inquire with an appreciative eye was creating chills down my spine. It touched the core of what I believe is the best way of working together, or doing research together. So through AI I'd found an approach to co-create research. The next step turned out to be a Ph.D. research project.

## How I started working on a Ph.D.

When the opportunity arose, through working with Prof. Dr. John Rijsman, to do a Ph.D. research and write a dissertation, another dream came true. I have always been very curious. The child in me was always asking the ‘why’ questions, and, now in doing research, I was ‘allowed’ to ask all the questions I wanted. I have always thought that the questions were important, so I paid a lot of attention to the creation of the ‘right’ questions that would get people to share their stories. I’ve also seen how I loved working with people that asked inspiring questions. John Rijsman and other people like Kristin Bodiford and Mille Themsen Duvander, who read my work, are asking inspiring questions as the, for me, perfect way of giving feedback. The way AI works, with sharing stories, and appreciating ‘what is’ showed me that this way of research was the best experience ever, for me at least. Later, in the final year of my research, I read Gergen’s award winning article in which he is inviting us to define research as world-making (Gergen, 2014). I found the final goal for the research. I was going to show how AI makes research future forming.

I wanted to use the AI approach in everything I did. Also my study of *aikido*, one of the Japanese martial arts got a place in my dissertation, due to the fact that it provided me with a way to bridge the world in which my head lives and the world my feet are in, through the practice of *Shizentai*. Through the use of this practice I was able to create a new principle for AI. It wasn’t until becoming an Associate Professor in Relational Research & Organization Transformation at NOVI University of Applied Sciences that I was able to include students as researchers in my research. With them I looked at the impact of working with AI in research. I’ll introduce them here.

## Interviewee's

When accepting the role of Associate Professor, suddenly I had a group of students available to be researchers in my own inquiry. I preferred working with people using AI as a research approach, and not the AI consultants who use AI as a model of change. Not everyone in the consultancy group looks at their work as being research. The group at NOVI working with AI was only two students, which isn't very big, and because in AI I've been used to working with as many stakeholders possible I decided to look for other groups of researchers. I was able to find a group of students who worked with AI in their Master and Ph.D. research. I'm very grateful to all the people who have written and talked about their ideas about what impact AI had on their research: Celiane Camargo-Borges, Edwin Groenenberg, Gita Baack, Inge Sari Panama, Irene Jonkers, Jacqueline M. Stavros, Jeanie Cockell, Jeff Fifield, JoanMcArthur-Blair, Jody Jacobson, Jos Heesen, Fong Qiyue, Joyce, Kristin Bodiford, Marloes van Bussel and Mille Themsen Duvander. You will get to know them throughout the dissertation. Jos and Edwin are part time Bachelor students from NOVI. Mille, Inge, Joyce and Marloes are Master students from various universities. Gita, Jackie, Irene, Jody, Jeff and Jeanie are Ph.D.'s that I met through the TAOS Institute. Celiane, Kristin, Joan, Jeanie and Jody are the five women, with Ph.D.s who are at TAOS, who joined me wondering about impact. I will introduce the researchers further in the dissertation, but here I want to look more in depth into the world of AI and the impact that discovering this world has had on me.

## The world of AI

AI has opened a whole new world to me. It is a world in which we look at strength, at opportunities, at aspirations and at results. AI, to me is a world in which we are allowed to dream. Dreaming, to me, is a way of putting ideas for the future on paper – in mind-maps (my favorite way of showing language in a pictures), in writing, in pictures, in drawing or even in movement. This is a world in which words and language are important, and with these words, we create worlds. I remember getting the first books about AI delivered at home; I would lock myself up in the room, with no phone, with no e-mail until I finished reading the book. Every time I sit down to work on questions such as the following, I get thrilled by the exercise and want to keep doing it.

*“Think about the times in your life when you are happiest. What is going on during these moments, and what are you thinking? Are there any patterns? What can you apply from these insights to other areas of your life to make them more joyful?” (Kelm, 2009)*

Or if I meditate on the following, the same thing happens.

*“The only limits we have are our beliefs of what’s possible. Reflect briefly on your year ahead and imagine the best it could possibly turn out. Then close your eyes and take ten minutes to imagine something even better.” (Ibid)*

AI has been described in many ways. Here is a practitioner-oriented definition: *“Appreciative Inquiry is the cooperative co-evolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them. It involves the discovery of what gives ‘life’ to a living system when it is most effective, alive, and constructively capable in economic, ecological, and human terms. AI involves the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system’s capacity to apprehend, anticipate, and heighten positive potential. The inquiry is mobilized through the crafting of the ‘unconditional positive question’, often involving hundreds or thousands of people. AI interventions focus on the speed of imagination and innovation instead of the negative, critical, and spiraling diagnoses commonly used in organizations. The discovery, dream, design, and destiny model links the energy of the positive core to changes never thought possible.” (Cooperrider et al, 2008, p.3)*

For me, everything is an inquiry and that is why I can fully relate to McNamee and Hosking saying: *“For us, and for those with whom we work, the term “inquiry” seems to imply an orientation toward exploration and opening up to the senses along with a curiosity and openness to what might be.” (McNamee & Hosking, 2012, p.4)* I will talk about this ‘looking at everything as an inquiry’ when describing the study of *aikido*, one of the Japanese martial arts.

I fully realize that *“Through our assumptions and choice of method we largely create the world we later discover.”* (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1999, p. 401 as quoted in Cooperrider et al, 2008, p. 353). So during the pre-phase of this research I have given the choices of method a lot of thought.

Every time I train at the Vriesman Dojo<sup>4</sup> in Amsterdam, I feel the importance of bringing the world of head and feet together through using the world of the belly. It is then that I realize that AI is not about the 4-D cycle (Discovery, Dream, Design, Delivery)<sup>5</sup>. To me, the principles<sup>6</sup> of AI are much more important to create research or a change process that is future forming. To me, that is the world of AI. Throughout this research, I’ve been able to place the principles of AI on to all actions that were taken and for most cases I’ve written about this in the dissertation. I’ll talk more about the principles and what AI is in the -Discovering the Path- section, in the literature review chapter on AI.

One of my personal strengths is that I’m fascinated with the future. This is described as Futuristic in the Strengths Finder 2.0 test (Rath, 2007) which I took in 2010. Working with an approach such as AI gives me all the opportunity I need to work with these strengths and make it possible to bring them to fruition.

My favorite way to spend time, is to share my dreams with others. But perhaps, even better, I like to learn about the dreams that others have. Working with AI gives me that opportunity. I like to appreciate ‘what is’ and look for opportunities and aspirations there. I like to help others find their aspirations and make them grow. This talent is called the Maximizer in the test mentioned above. The realization that research is done in conversation with others has changed my view on the art of inquiry completely. I’ll share these insights in the -Discovering the Path- section.

When I started working with John Rijsman, in early 2007, for finding an appropriate theme for my research, one thing was clear; it had to be about AI. I wanted to include AI as a method of research, but I also wanted to include the experience of others with AI. In the course of the years my ways of working with AI have changed. I have been able to use AI as a method of change at various organizations in the Netherlands. In 2007, there was a software development organization, Easyflex that asked me to help them find a way to start working with the talents of the people who they had in their teams, instead of working in project teams based on the function descriptions that people had. And even

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<sup>4</sup> In *aikido* the training facility is called a dojo.

<sup>5</sup> The 4-D cycle will be explained in the chapter on Appreciative Inquiry.

<sup>6</sup> The Principles of AI will be explained in the chapter on Appreciative Inquiry.

though the project was successful it seemed too small to me for a Ph.D. research project, then. Looking back at the research now, I think it would have worked with Easyflex well, because in this project we were creating research that was future forming. But I also think that it has been a good experience to work with other organizations after that, in order to make my skills greater, and to include more stories in this research.

There were various network start-ups that asked me to help them with their strategic planning, but in all of these I was not given the opportunity to do a full AI summit for them. I found that I could only use parts of AI like the appreciative interviews and SOAR<sup>7</sup>. Mostly this was because of money issues and people were afraid to invest many full working days with each other to create a good network organization which was ready for the future. Now looking back at these experiences, I see that it has given me the experience I needed later, and to appreciate what needs to be done.

In 2012 I started working for DWI (Dienst Werk en Inkomen<sup>8</sup>) in Amsterdam, as a member of their Appreciative Inquiry Pool<sup>9</sup>. There was a good opportunity for an AI research there because the organization was changing the focus of their program in which they wanted their consultants to look at what their clients were capable of doing instead of looking at what did not work. However, in the end there was no commitment from the Board, which would have been necessary since I would have included as many stakeholders as possible, asking for time and commitment.

Studying the martial art *aikido*<sup>10</sup> has always been on my wish list. I wanted to combine the experiences I had on the *aikido* mat with the experiences I obtained through working with AI. In a way this has happened. I've been able to include work on what I call *Shizentai*, which is a practice from *aikido* that will help researchers to keep an open mind, to be open to a broad view, to be curious and to remain calm while working with AI. I will share this technique in the - Delivering the Future- section, and share more about *aikido* in the -Discovering the Path- section. From this practice in *aikido* I've created a new principle for AI, which I've called the *Shizentai* Principle. However, first I'd like to share more information about how NOVI created an opportunity for a Ph.D. research project for me.

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<sup>7</sup> SOAR is the strategic planning method created by Stavros and Hinrichs in 2009, the letters stand for Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and Results.

<sup>8</sup> DWI is the Amsterdam governmental organization that helps people who lost their jobs more than two years ago to find what work they can do.

<sup>9</sup> Pool is the word used by DWI to talk about the group of AI facilitators they contracted. The group consists of three AI facilitators: Ralph Weickl, Wick van der Vaart and myself.

<sup>10</sup> More on the martial art of Aikido will be shared in chapter 2



## PhD case at NOVI

Working at NOVI University of Applied Sciences as a teacher first and later as Associate Professor in Relational Research and Organization Transformation made it possible to create Ph.D. research that added value, to me, to NOVI and to the academic community. I wanted to work with AI as a research approach and for that my students/researchers needed to be involved in research, preferably at different 'levels'. NOVI is a commercial education institute and has an accreditation for a Bachelor in Information Technology and a Bachelor in Business Administration. Many of the NOVI students work in the field of *Information Technology*. The rich stories that arose from this group that were not as used to talking about and sharing their dreams were heart warming. Applying social constructionism in my research classes made it possible to connect two worlds again. I have been blessed by the opportunity to work with these people and enjoyed their sharing of their dreams tremendously. I've noticed that after working with AI for a while my own way of looking at the world began to change. The meaning of language, with its various ways of expressing such as "*written words, sighs and emotions and the multitude of bodily actions such as eye movements, and gestures*" (Anderson in Simon & Chard, 2014, p. 66) created a world-view that showed opportunities instead of looking at problems and obstacles, and through that became more and more something to reflect on for me. Sharing stories became part of my work and my life. Having dialogue with the NOVI students who were doing their Bachelor research project, I realized that sharing stories is not 'normal', or at least not in all settings. And getting the whole system in one room is not 'normal', or at least not in all settings. As Anderson stated "*I use the word dialogue to refer to a particular kind and quality of conversation: talking in which meaning-making is its essence – as previously discussed in Anderson, 1997.*" (Anderson, in Simon & Chard, 2014, p. 67)

This research allowed me to look at the different realities that are amongst us, and I hope that this research may be the bridge between some of these realities. There are writings about AI in higher education, personal- and organization development that I want to share in the next chapter briefly. I will go over them in more depth in the –Discovering the Path- section.



## AI in higher education, personal- and organization development

There are writings about Appreciative Inquiry (AI) in higher education, (Cockell & McArthur-Blair, 2012) (Mather & Hulme, 2013) but these discuss how AI has transformed the higher education organization and the way that people working in that area are cooperating after using AI. There are also several works about how AI can be used in Organization Development and/or Change (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, *Appreciative Inquiry Handbook*, 2008); (Ludema, Whitney, Mohr, & Griffen, 2003); (Barrett, Fry, & Wittockx, 2010; Blair, 2010); (Barrett & Fry, 2005); (Lewis, Passmore, & Cantore, 2008); (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, *The power of Appreciative Inquiry*, 2003). And there are several works about how AI can be used in personal development by working from the individual's point of view. (Cooperrider D. , 2012); (Kelm, 2005 and 2008) I will write about all of these different realities in which AI plays a role. In the next chapter I want to share more of my thoughts about the impact of AI in Research.

## The impact of working with AI in Research

I am interested in what happens if AI is used as a research method. Mainly, I'm interested in this because AI was created through doing action-research. *"Consistent with the notion of knowledge creation [...], what is learned – what is created in the meaning-making process of shared inquiry – in collaborative-dialogic research is practical knowledge that has local relevancy and usefulness for the participants."* (Anderson in Simon & Chard, 2014, p. 71)

For the purpose of this dissertation I have looked at researchers who used AI in higher education. I have interviewed Bachelor, Master and Ph.D. students – researchers, who are using AI as their method of research. Through looking at what the impact has been on these research projects I want to look at how AI can help to create research in a future forming direction. And I hope that by doing so this dissertation may be an example, or inspiration to other universities and organizations internationally. Zandee and Cooperrider talk about how *"AI celebrates the power of our imaginative mind. As a form of action research in pursuit of knowledge creation for social innovation, it invites us to be daring in our explorations and articulations of alternative possibilities for our shared and organized existence"* (Zandee & Cooperrider, 2008, p.190). Looking at social innovation in higher education, research and change might be future forming when we use the action research direction of AI.

Like Gergen (2009) I am seeking to recognize a world that is not within people but within their relationships. It's not about what is between our ears! It is about what is between the noses! The picture below shows Ingeborg Vandepoel, another Ph.D. student with Prof.dr. John Rijsman, and myself. Jan Somers, the photographer has created a project taking pictures like this.



Figure 2: Project Nose to Nose - United noses for wisdom and peace - Jan Somers

What happens between the noses in research is important to me. In order to discover what happens, I not only needed to interview the researchers, but I needed to start a dialogue about recognizing a world within relationships. So after the interviews with the researchers, I decided to start another group session. Perhaps, through looking at a world within relationships, it becomes even clearer what the impact is of using AI in research. I had conversations about this topic with people working at universities in the field of research. I wanted to include the stories of students at NOVI who have used AI, so the stories of both Jos Heesen and Edwin Groenenberg are shared in the -Designing the future- section. All opportunities in working with AI are used and shared in this dissertation to show how AI can help make research future forming. AI has been used in various forms in this research. One of these forms was that of a template to write the dissertation.

## AI as a template to write this dissertation

I have not only talked to people who used AI in their research. I myself have worked with AI during this research as well. Also I am using AI, with its different phases, to write this dissertation. Here are the steps that you can expect throughout the dissertation:

Step 1: Defining the inquiry – this is the phase in which what the research entails is confirmed. The central theme of the research is given, together with mentioning of who will be part of the research, and the research questions. The SOAR (Stavros & Hinrichs, 2009) method is used to describe the research and its strengths, opportunities, aspirations and results.

Step 2: Discovering the path – this is the phase in which the literature review and research methodology (ontology) is described, the various theories used are discussed, and you will learn more about the researchers in this research.

Step 3: Dreaming the future – this is the phase in which the stories that were shared in the interviews are being shared and analyzed (epistemology). Also in this phase the stories written by the group of five Ph.D.s from TAOS are shared.

Step 4: Designing the future – in this phase the focus will be on what the stories shared in the Discovery phase and the analysis from the Dream phase can add to NOVI's University of Applied Sciences, or universities in general.

Step 5: Delivering the future – in this phase I've looked at how the findings can be used for first, second and third person research. For the first person I have looked at what this research can add to the researcher, or the individual. In this section a description of how reflection can be done at NOVI is shared. Additionally, through the practice of *Shizentai*, I show how I've bridged the world of head and the world of feet. For the second person I have looked at what this research can add to organizations like NOVI and other universities, worldwide. For the third person I have created an overview through a mind-map and a description of what this research can add to the academic world.

The following shows the above-mentioned steps in a figure:

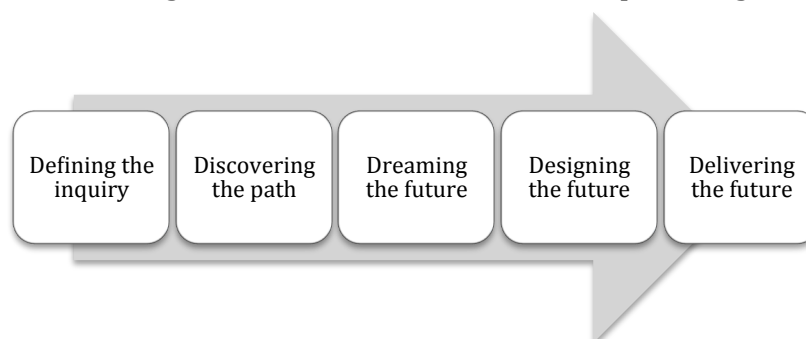


Figure 3: the 5 steps in this research

The next the topic of this research is defined in the following.

## Defining the Topic

In order to define the topic of this research, I examined finding an approach that would help me define the topic through asking questions, which as I will confirm later in the –Discovering the Path- section, is an important part of AI. An interesting way of defining the topic is to use the SOAR questions (Stavros & Hinrichs, 2009). SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results) is the strategic planning method that has its basis in AI. For the purpose of this research I have re-shaped the ‘normal’ SOAR questions and provided my answers. I was unable to have co-creating sessions with all stakeholders, since they were not known at the time of defining the research, so I’ve answered the questions from my perspective as researcher. What I did try to do, while answering the questions, is to look at them from both the world of head and the world of feet, using the bridge of *Shizentai*.

### Strength:

- What am I most proud of for this research? How does that reflect my greatest strengths?
- What makes me unique? What can I be best at in my world?
- What is my proudest achievement in the last year or two?
- How do I use my strengths to get results?
- How do my strengths fit with the realities of the marketplace?
- What do I do or provide that is world class for my stakeholders, research, and other potential stakeholders?

### Answers:

In 2010 I completed the StrengthFinder 2.0 test (Gallup, 2010). My personal top 5 strength themes are Maximizer, Strategic, Intellection, Futuristic, and Ideation. Themes are the five strengths that are most clear in who a person is. To answer the Strength questions I use the report that was provided in the test.

My greatest strength that is clearly reflected in this research is Futuristic. The Theme Description in the report says:

*“People who are especially talented in the Futuristic theme are inspired by the future and what could be. They inspire others with their visions of the future.”* (Gallup, 2010)

I look to the future rather than reviewing what has already occurred. I see little reason to cling to the past. The future, to me, is full of potential. This is my greatest strength, and something that I’m proud of, for the research. Also it is what makes me unique, because I think that most research at the moment is done through looking at the past or at problems that arise. I understand that in the academic world it is important to spend time looking at the past, but for me, looking at possibilities and aspirations for the future is more of value. If we

realize that words create worlds (The Constructionist Principle<sup>11</sup>), and that through conversation we live in the world our questions create (The Simultaneity Principle<sup>12</sup>), then research, when using AI combined with the practice of *Shizentai*, can be world-making. The practice of *Shizentai* is shared in the –Delivering the Future- section.

My proudest achievement in the last year or two comes from my strength called Maximizer. The report says

*“People who are especially talented in the Maximizer theme focus on strengths as a way to stimulate personal and group excellence. They seek to transform something strong into something superb.”*  
(Gallup, 2010)

This strength helps me to be calm and composed in a variety of situations. I have the ability to create word pictures that describe the future. This can inspire people, but mostly it inspired the Bachelor students, during their research project. By nature, I figure out what makes most people unique or special, and through that talent I can help students discover the best research project for them. The other talent that helped me in the research is Intellection. The report says

*“People who are especially talented in the Intellection theme are characterized by their intellectual activity. They are introspective and appreciate intellectual discussions.”* (Gallup, 2010).

This talent is shown by my love of research. My thirst for ‘knowledge’ causes me to explore many topics of study. I enjoy opportunities to acquire additional information, skills, and experience. My Strategic strength lies in the connection to the market. I generate innovative ideas and I offer unique perspectives about events, people, and proposals. I tend to identify a goal, devise numbers ways of reaching it, and then choose the best alternative. I see opportunities, trends, and solutions before others see them. Sorting through information rarely intimidates me. I welcome the abundance of information. Like a detective, I sort through it and identify key pieces of evidence. Following these leads, I bring the big picture into view.

With my fifth talent, Ideation, I contribute many innovative ideas to a group brainstorming sessions. I tend to be highly imaginative when proposals are fully heard and any criticism is reserved for a later time. I am thrilled to read about a novel concept or an original theory. I am an original and innovative thinker.

My proudest achievement in the last two years would be the completion of the research at hand and also coaching students at NOVI University of Applied Sciences bringing their Bachelor research to a good end. But, I feel, the most

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<sup>11</sup> The Constructionist Principle, one of the principles on which AI is based will be shared in chapter 2

<sup>12</sup> The Simultaneity Principle, one of the principles on which AI is based will be shared in chapter 2

important achievement is that of bridging the world of head and the world of feet through the practice of *Shizentai*.

I think that my qualities are needed in the marketplace today. Research that is future forming can be an added value to the marketplace. Making research future forming through using AI is world class for potential stakeholders, universities worldwide, and their students. Perhaps organizations will start to use research methodology to discover what added value their decisions have when a research approach is future forming. This might be an opportunity.

### **Opportunities:**

- How do I make sense of opportunities provided by the external forces and trends?
- What are the top three opportunities on which I should focus my efforts?
- How can I best meet the needs of our stakeholders, including customers, employees, shareholders, and community?
- Who are possible new customers?
- How can I distinctively differentiate us from existing or potential competitors?
- What are possible new markets, products, services or processes?
- How can I reframe challenges to be seen as exciting opportunities?
- What new skills do I need to move forward?

### **Answers:**

It is not only Gergen who is asking for research to be future forming. In brainstorm sessions that I've held at various organizations and at NOVI it is often clear that looking at the future and discovering new opportunities gives energy, while looking at what went wrong takes energy. New markets or services for research as future forming could be organizations that are aware of trends in the market and want to find new and innovative ways of working with these trends. New skills to move forward are perhaps not new, but I think that as researchers we can prosper from learning to be in the state *Shizentai*. In the – Delivering the future- section of this research I will introduce a practice that will help to be in that state while doing research. *Shizentai* can help bridge the world of head and the world of feet. Most researchers work from a deficit based model, so by creating future forming research working with AI might be the distinctively differentiation. Possible new markets, products, services or processes could be evaluation, which is valuation when working with AI. The use of AI as a valuation product is an exciting opportunity of how research can be future forming. The skills are available; the thing that is lacking is opportunity. I would love to be in the position where I can talk about the added value for the organization in using a future forming research approach.



### **Aspirations:**

- When you explore your values and aspirations, what are you deeply passionate about?
- Reflecting on the Strengths and Opportunities conversations, who are you, who should you become, and where should you go in the future?
- What is your most compelling aspiration?
- What strategic initiatives (i.e. projects, programs, and processes) would support your aspirations?

### **Answers:**

To me it is clear that my own passion is to make research future forming. My most compelling aspiration is to help others make their own research future forming. One of the strategic initiatives that would support that aspiration is to facilitate AI workshops in which researchers can create their own future forming research. Another strategic initiative is to create workshops to coach people to be in the state of *Shizentai*. I would love to work with the BedrijfsAikido organization, which I will introduce in the –Discovering the path- section in this dissertation. The workshops on *Shizentai* could be part of our work together. I would love to create research modules for universities worldwide that support research as future forming. After successful completion of this Ph.D. research I would love to be involved in progressive Business Schools or Management Schools (universities) worldwide that work with a relational approach to research that is future forming. Combined with working for universities I would love to do research for companies, using AI as the research tool. The creation of a new principle to AI, which I will talk about in the chapter on Principles of AI and the acceptance in the AI community, is another aspiration.

### **Results:**

- Considering your Strengths, Opportunities, and Aspirations, what meaningful measures would indicate that you are on track to achieving your goals?
- What are 3 to 5 indicators that would create a scorecard that addresses a triple bottom line of profit, people, and planet?
- What resources are needed to implement vital projects?
- What are the best rewards to support those who achieve your goals?

### **Answers:**

The best reward to support me is to write articles on how research can be future forming. Indicators that address a bottom line of profit, people, and planet would be: a successful defense of the research in 2015, the creation of a future forming research program for NOVI University of Applied Sciences, working at universities or institutes that work with a relational approach to research. Coaching students to make their research future forming. Another reward to



support would be to work together with the BedrijfsAikido organization to create a research approach that is future forming to validate their work up to now. Doing research for companies using AI as research tool, and the acceptance by the AI community of the newly added principle is another result that I'm looking for.

Below is a figure in which the SOAR is described for this research. Neel Hurman, one of NOVI's bachelors, created the figure; she has worked with SOAR in her Bachelor research. Next the affirmative topic is discussed.

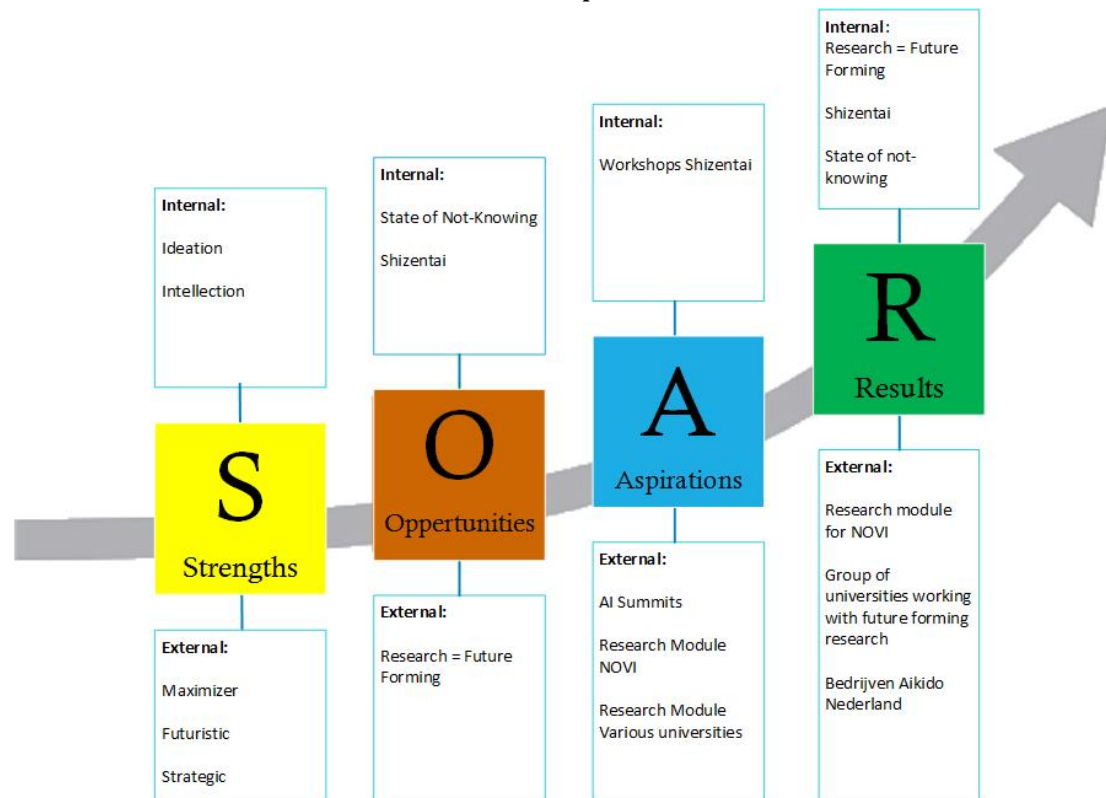


Figure 4: SOAR picture created by Neel Hurman, 2015

## Affirmative topic and research questions

*"The first step in an AI application is selecting the affirmative topic choice"*

(Cooperrider et al, 2008, p. 34)

An affirmative topic is the guideline on which the research is based. Cooperrider says, *"AI has demonstrated that human systems grow in the direction of their persistent inquiries, and this propensity is strongest and most sustainable when the means and ends of inquiry are positively correlated"* (Cooperrider et al, 2008, p.34).

The topic selection team does choosing the affirmative topic. In the case of this research the topic selection team consists of John Rijsman and myself.

Cooperrider confirms that to have a compelling topic it should meet the following criteria:

- Topics are affirmative or stated in the positive.
- Topics are desirable. They identify the objectives people want.
- The group is genuinely curious about them and wants to learn more.
- The topics move in the direction the group wants to go (Cooperrider et al, 2008, p. 41).

The affirmative topic for this inquiry is:

### **Appreciative Inquiry makes Research Future Forming**

No central research question was formed. The affirmative topic was used as a guiding affirmation during the course of the research.

During the research process the following questions were leading the way.

*What is Appreciative Inquiry?*

The first question to be answered was on what AI is. In the -Discovering the path- section a description of the method is given in the literature review, together with many of the models building on the AI approach that were developed worldwide.

The next question is: *How can Appreciative Inquiry help form a future forming orientation to research?*

Based on Gergen's description of Research as Creative Construction in this research, in the -Discovering the path- section the various directions for organizations, through what is called the 'new wave' in organizational development, and higher education is guiding the research in such a manner that in the -Designing the Future- section the NOVI case is shared where AI helped to create a vocabulary from which new practices can emerge.

The next question is: *How can the new principle, Shizentai add value?*

In addition to the principles that form AI a new principle was added, the *Shizentai* principle that can help link the world of head and the world of feet. In the research a practice is shared which helps researchers to live in different worlds without losing calm and overview.

The next question is: *What is the impact of using Appreciative Inquiry on research?*

During the research 12 people were interviewed. These participants were all researchers who used AI in their own research. Their stories are shared in the – Dreaming the Future- section of the research. Five Ph.D.'s were asked to share their story on impact.

This research is used to gain insight and transparency in what AI is and how the method can be used to develop research in a future forming direction, within an academic setting. The insights are of value to students, researchers and AI practitioners. Students learn about how research can be future forming, researchers discover a different way of looking at research, and practitioners will discover that AI is not only to be used as a method of change, but can be used for research as well. One of the main goals of this research is to look at how AI can become a new, or different way of working for the students at NOVI University of Applied Science, which can be used by other universities too.

One of the outcomes of working with AI, both in Organizational Development and in Research, is that looking into 'what is' seemed to work different than looking into problems. Authors like Cooperrider et al (2008), Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2003), and Ludema, Whitney, Mohr and Griffin (2003) all talk about the positive effects that inquiring after 'what is' show. Many of the Bachelor students at the NOVI University of Applied Sciences talked about this, for them new way of looking at research. They were all afraid that the focus on successful stories would show that they were biased. Another concern for them was their role as the researcher. What happens if you are part of the group? Can you still be objective in your research? We talked about this during the course of the inquiry they did at their organization. Both Jos Heesen and Edwin Groenenberg talk about this in their reflective statements, which are to be found in the –Designing the Future – section of this dissertation. One of the first steps taken while working with AI is to create an appreciative climate.

## Creating an Appreciative climate

Before starting with research, or before starting with interviews I want to create an Appreciative Climate. *“As with any engagement, the beginning highly influences the climate for the event”* (Cockell & McArthur-Blair, 2012, p. 114).

Through AI we learn that whatever we inquire after, attention flows to. The choice of what the research is about is therefore very important. *“Creating an appreciative climate in a short time frame relies on the clear articulation of the purpose of the AI and a clear road map of the process, the agenda”* (Cockell & McArthur-Blair, 2012, p.114).

I was curious as to how students create an appreciative climate in their study, and were they actually creating that appreciative climate? Have they been able to appreciate the differences that are there in their organization, or in the community that was part of their research? Were they able to listen to their stakeholders, without having judgmental thoughts? Were they able to set aside their own opinions? Were they curious? Information on how this was done by the researchers (students) is shared in the interviews in the –Dreaming the future- section of this dissertation. More information is shared through a questionnaire that was sent to students who have recently finished their Bachelor study at NOVI University of Applied Sciences. I have asked them to complete the questionnaire in order to write a self-reflection on their research. The questions I asked on how to create an appreciative climate are not to set a standard for good AI research. These are questions that pop up in my mind when I start thinking about an appreciative climate. Perhaps none of these are answered in the interviews, or sharing of stories. But by asking these questions, even if that only happens in my mind, not in sharing the questions, the purpose is set. There is a road map, the agenda.

For each and every process created through AI, it is important to create an appreciative climate. For me this has been important throughout the process of working on my dissertation. In all the interviews I held I started creating an appreciative climate by asking the researcher to describe what their best experience was in the research process. *“If moving right into the inquiry, the storytelling interviews act as a wonderful way to break the ice”* (Cockell & McArthur-Blair, 2012, p.115).

But there is more to this than just starting to ask the right question. Through the Clear Leadership training I had with Gervase Bushe in 2012, I learned that there is more to the creation of an appreciative climate. I’ve learned that the mind-set of both me, and the people who I work with is a key component in creating the appreciative climate to work together. More on Clear Leadership is shared in the –Discovering the Path- section of this research. The practice of *aikido*, which is discussed at length in the -Discovering the path- section of this dissertation, will show how techniques that can be learned without having to become an *aikido*-

ka<sup>13</sup>, can help to be in the state of *Shizentai*. More on the state of *Shizentai* will be given in the -Discovering the path- section and a practice is shared in the – Delivering the Future- section of this dissertation.

In both interviews and group conversations, “*Often some reframing (Tatchenkery & Metzker, 2006) needs to happen*” (Cockell & McArthur-Blair, 2012, p.117).

Tatchenkery & Metzker talk about how “*A wide variety of tools for changing behaviors and thought patterns are available*” (Tatchenkery & Metzker, 2006, p. 124).

Tatchenkery and Metzker use the word reframing and describe the following tools to use:

- Tool 1: change your stories
- Tool 2: change your reflections
- Tool 3: change your questions
- Tool 4: seek diverse ideas (talk to someone different)

Within these tools one can set agreements to create an appreciative climate. One of the tools is on changing your questions. In the next chapter I’d like to talk about the generic questions in AI.

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<sup>13</sup> Person studying Aikido

## Generic questions

AI uses a set of generic questions (Cooperrider et al, 2008) that form the base of the questions used in the AI discovery phase. *“Perhaps, the most important thing we do as leaders and consultants is inquiry. We read situations; we do organizational analysis and diagnosis. It all starts with inquiry. The key point is that the way we know is fateful. The questions we ask, the things that we choose to focus on, and the topics we choose to ask questions about determine what we find. What we find becomes the data and the story out of which we dialogue about and envision the future. And so the seeds of change are implicit in the very first questions we ask. Inquiry is intervention.”* (Cooperrider et al, 2008, p. 103)

AI is based on the premise that the inquiry, or the research in this case, moves in the direction of the questions asked. In order to create engaging appreciative questions the following guidelines are given:

- State questions in the affirmative.
- Begin with a leading question that builds on the affirmative topic choice.
- Give a broad definition to the topic.
- Invite participants to use storytelling and narratives.
- Phrase in rapport talk, not report talk.
- Allow ambiguity because it gives room to “swim around”.
- Value “what is”.
- Spark the appreciative imagination by helping the person locate experiences that are worth valuing.
- Convey unconditional positive regard.
- Evoke essential values, aspirations, and inspirations

(Cooperrider et al, 2008, p.106).

When engaging in appreciative questions, perhaps we can *replace the persistent rush to establish “what is the case” and begin to ask, “what kind of world could we build”* (Gergen, 2014, p.6).

For this research I've used the following set of questions:

Table 1: Interview questions used in this research, modified from (Mohr & Watkins, 2002)

<p><i>Best experience</i></p> <p>Tell me a story about the best times that you have had during the time of your research. Looking at your entire experience, recall a time when you felt most alive or most excited about your research. What made it an exciting experience? Who else was involved? Describe the event in detail. Tell me the story and take me there by drawing pictures through words.</p> <p><i>Values</i></p> <p>What are the things you value about yourself and your research?</p> <p>Without being humble, what do you value most about yourself – as a human being, friend, parent, citizen, and so on?</p> <p>When you are feeling best about your research, what do you value about it?</p> <p>Tell me about these values, in a story. Make sure you tell me everything there is to know about it.</p> <p><i>Core life-giving factor</i></p> <p>What do you think is the core value or factor that allowed your research to pull through during difficult times? If this core value or factor did not exist, how would that make your research totally different than it currently is?</p> <p><i>Three wishes</i></p> <p>If you had three wishes for your research, what would they be? (Please tell me about three wishes at the start, during and after).</p> <p>After interviewing Jeanie Cockell Ph.D. I've added another question:</p> <p>What was the impact on your research, using AI as a method? Can you tell me your story about impact?</p>
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## Sampling, or Who to Involve?

I wanted to involve a broad variety of people in the research. The main reason for that is that in AI we include all, or as many as possible, stakeholders. But also I wanted to be able to hear as much voices as possible on what impact AI has had on research from the perspective of the people interviewed. I have looked at different groups. I will call the people I worked with researchers. The first groups were the part time Bachelor students from NOVI University of Applied Sciences. These students/researchers are working in information technology departments at DJI<sup>14</sup>, and the University of Tilburg. For them, getting their Bachelor degree was important. At the moment of working on this research two students in the NOVI group had finished working with AI. Some students who agreed to use AI in their research have not finished yet, or have not started their research as yet. Their research will be used at a later stage to write articles on the subject of AI as an approach to future forming research. This is also a great opportunity to help these students with the experiences gained through this research.

A second opportunity came through the involvement of the Taos institute. A search of the institute's website showed a large group of Ph.D. researchers who had used AI. To a certain degree the forming of the group out of the Taos institute was snowball sampling, in which an initial set of researchers would subsequently lead to more people to invite.

The third opportunity came through the involvement of the NHTV University of Applied Sciences, specifically the Imagineering Master, where I met with Liliya Terzieva and Celiane Camargo-Borges. They offered help, by introducing me to some of their Master of Imagineering students who had used AI in their projects. Another Master student was added from the University of Utrecht, and another Ph.D. student came from Nyenrode University.

More details on the researchers will be shared in the -Discovering the path-section of this dissertation.

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<sup>14</sup> Dienst Justitiele Inrichtingen, this is the Justice Department.



## 2. Discovering the path

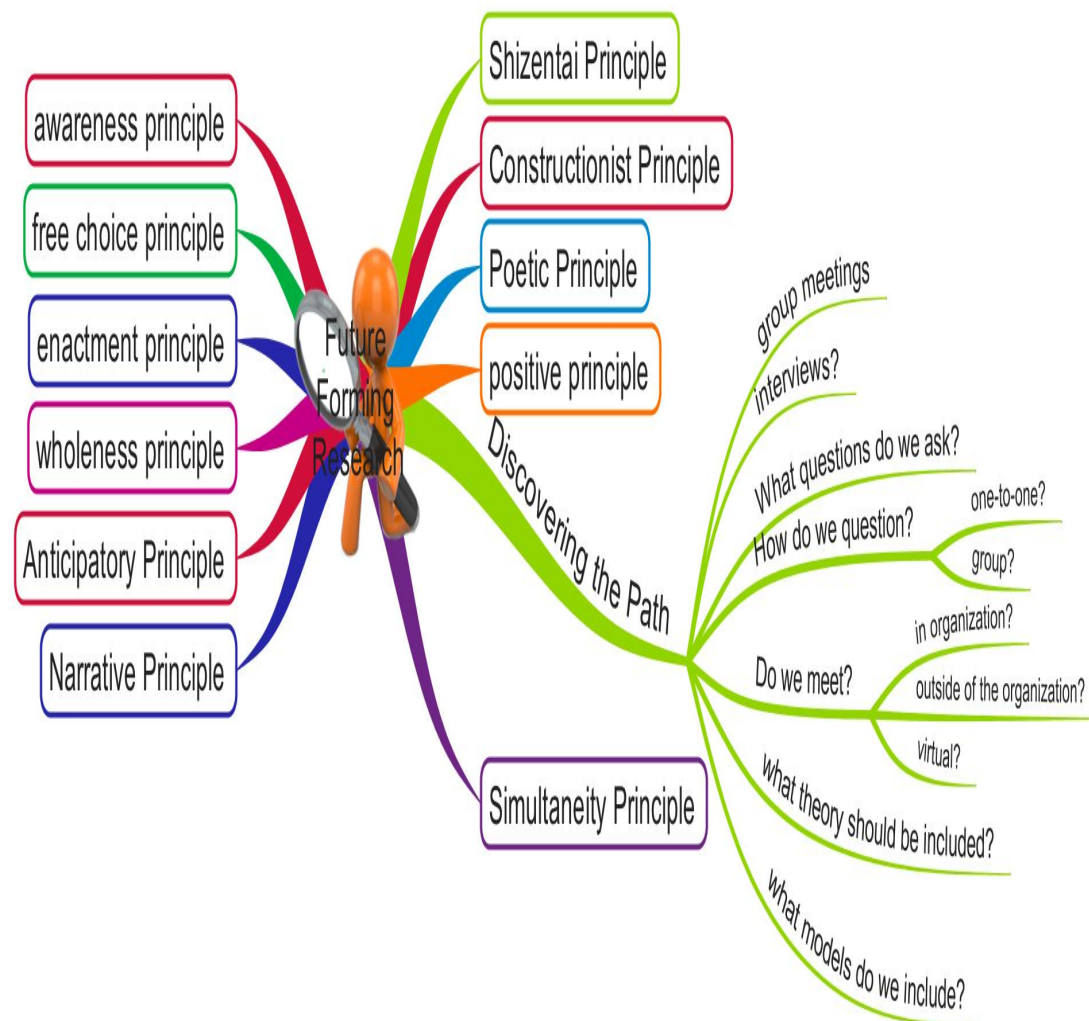


Figure 5: Discovering the Path

## Discovering the path, literature review

In the first phase in AI, which is called the Discovery phase, we identify what gives life. We appreciate the best of what is. We inquire into our best experiences, so far. This is called the first phase, but before getting into this phase a lot of work has been done already. In this research project the initial work is described in the –Defining the Inquiry- section.

For this research, the –Discovering the path- section is the area in which I will show the literature review, the ontology, like Social Constructionism, Dialogical Organization Development, *Aikido* and Appreciative Inquiry in its different forms; SOAR, Appreciative Living, ALIVE, and so on. I will introduce the researchers who were interviewed on what impact AI had on their research, and the group researchers who shared their story on wondering about impact.

Cooperrider et al. (2008) say that this is where the storytelling begins. I would say that this is where the sharing of dreams begins. Sharing dreams, appreciating ‘what is’ will help research from mirroring to making (Gergen, 2014). Both the literature review and the co-creation of inquiry are, to me, that what gives life to the research.

## Social Constructionism

Social Constructionism (SC) is taken as the scientific base for this dissertation. Main reason for this is that SC forms the base for AI. A second reason is that I feel invited by Gergen to look at research, as the creation of *what is to become* (Gergen, 2014, p.6).

Many people have been working on the creation of ideas that form SC. In fact we, reader and researcher, are part of the conversation leading to new science. *"The ideas generally called social constructionist, do not belong to any one individual. There is no single book or school of philosophy that defines social construction"* (Gergen, 2009, p.2). Many will find SC to bring exciting ideas, but many will also find it to be enormously controversial. SC challenges truth, objectivity, value neutrality and the self. These subjects can unsettle a lot of ideas that, especially in research, are now seen as 'normal'. *"If we understand social constructionism as treating all theories as stories, we can also recognize methods as narrative products and as producing of narratives. The narratives people bring to their workplace or social life are co-constructed, shaped between people and subject to interpretation."* (Anderson & Goolishian, 1988; Burr, 1995, as quoted by Simon in Simon & Chard, 2014, p. 11).

Gergen has given five assumptions that form the backbone for SC in the book *An invitation to Social Construction*.

1. The way in which we understand the world is not required by 'what there is'.
2. The ways in which we describe and explain the world are the outcomes of relationship.
3. Constructions gain their significance from their social utility.
4. As we describe and explain, so do we fashion our future.
5. Reflection on our taken-for-granted worlds is vital to our future well being (Gergen, 2009, p. 5-12).

The TAOS institute gives orienting principles to new associates:

Social Construction: Orienting Principles

Kenneth J. Gergen

**We live in worlds of meaning.** We understand and value the world and ourselves in ways that emerge from our personal history and shared culture.

Worlds of meaning are intimately related to action. We act largely in terms of what we interpret to be real, rational, satisfying, and good. Without meaning there would be little worth doing.

Worlds of meaning are constructed within relationships. What we take to be real, rational and are given birth in relationships. Without relationship there would be little of meaning.

New worlds of meaning are possible. We are not possessed or determined by the past. We may abandon or dissolve dysfunctional ways of life, and together create alternatives.

To sustain what is valuable, or to create new futures, requires participation in relationships. If we damage or destroy relations, we lose the capacity to sustain a way of life, and to create new futures.

When worlds of meaning intersect, creative outcomes may occur. New forms of relating, new realities, and new possibilities may all emerge.

When worlds of meaning conflict, they may lead to alienation and aggression, thus undermining relations and their creative potential.

Through creative care for relationships, the destructive potentials of conflict may be reduced, or transformed.

The preceding understandings do not constitute beliefs. They are neither true nor false. They are ways of approaching life that, for many, hold great promise.

Source: Taos Institute, no date.

According to Gergen (2010) there are three movements that form the base for SC:

1. The first movement may be viewed as critical, with its ground in the writings of Foucault. Who said that as soon as you take a declaration to be true, it would have power over you? Gergen asks us to think about how mental illnesses are constructed in the last 20-30 years. Whatever we do, whatever we carry, will also construct alternative ways. It is more a matter of wanting to look for alternative ways.
2. From the literary theory we learn that from the moment we want to describe something, we go into some sort of language game, with rules of description (Bertens, 2001). In Western society we have a language of labeling things. But what if our language was dance, or for this research, what if our language was Aikido? Aikido is one of the martial arts and will be described in more depth in chapter 2.10. What if we decide to look at this theory from a more positive side and decide that we are free to generate new words? We could look at this as an invitation to form new ways of language.

3. The third source would be the social theory with its base in the writings of Kuhn, who's books in the 70s form a point to state that whatever scientists do, it's going to come from the community in which they exists. There is no independent individual, or observer. The observer is part of a community. And will use the traditions of that community. On the positive side: if we were to generate a way of crossing cultures, it'll require some kind of collaborative effort. Then we would be looking at possibilities.

*"On research we can say that the dominant research tradition has emerged within a modernist worldview. Modernism assumes that, with the proper tools and techniques, we will be able to discover reality. Postmodernism, on the other hand, challenges the notion that there is one reality to be discovered. Instead, postmodern theorists propose that our ways of talking and relating to each other and the world should be the focus of study and therefore, the idea of multiple truths, multiple realities, and multiple methods for exploring such realities is paramount."* (McNamee, in Simon & Chard, 2014, p. 74)

Looking at research from a constructionist view the inquiry is on the interactive processes of people in relation with each other and their environments.

Gergen is inviting us to look at research as future forming. In his award-winning article he says: *"In my view the most productive route in this case (considering the contours of research from a future forming perspective), is not to embark on a disjunctive, imaginary world – a world of inquiry beyond the reach of contemporary researchers. Rather, it would seem more promising to examine current and emerging practices with future forming potential"* (Gergen, 2014, p.9). *"The future is ours – together – to create."* (Gergen, 2009, p.5)

The following chapter zooms in on relational research.

## Relational Research

In this chapter I would like to critically evaluate how various authors think about a relational approach to research. *For over 50 years now social scientists have joined with scholars across the humanities and natural sciences in dialogue and debate on the extent to which our common practices of establishing knowledge embody the traditional ideals of objectivity and truth.* (Gergen, 2014, p.2)

Gergen talks about *“the empiricist tradition, holding that descriptions of the world are “data driven”, and can be corrected and improved through observation. On the other are numerous scholars from across the social sciences holding that without something akin to a theoretical or linguistic forestructure, there are no meaningful observations. In effect, theory determines what count as data.”* (Gergen, 2014, p.2)

I do not wish to discuss the limits and dangers of traditional research. I prefer to discuss research in a future forming direction, with the creation of new practices and collaborative action. Gergen (2014) talks about *“From Mirroring to Making”*. Relational research can be the guide to show not what is, but to create what is to become. And therein *“lies the essence of a future forming orientation to research”*. (Gergen, 2014, p6)

Because of my desire to build a bridge between the world of head and the world of feet through the world of belly I feel a resonance with the Aristotelian concept of knowledge through *praxis*. Gergen says; *“Where the pursuit of knowledge through theoria is to establish an articulated truth, knowledge through praxis is achieved through and represented within ongoing action”*. (Gergen, 2014, p.6)

Gergen and Gergen see a paradigm in the world of social science where *“Broad and longstanding agreements on such issues as truth, objectivity, rationality, values, and progress have everywhere been thrust into question”* (Gergen & Gergen, 2008, p. 159).

A social constructionist view at the world is that of people through glasses of relationship. In social constructionism there is no truth, objectivity, rationality, values and progress without the relationships. *“It is not individuals who come together to create relationships, but relationships, that are responsible for the very conception of the individual”* (Gergen & Gergen, 2008, p. 163).

When looking toward Future Forming research *“the most productive route is not to embark on a disjunctive, imaginary world – a world of inquiry beyond the reach of contemporary researchers. Rather, it would seem more promising to examine current and emerging practices with future forming potential”*. (Gergen, 2014, p. 9) In this examination Research as Creative Construction can be seen as a more pronounced step toward the development of future-altering research. *“Traditional research is often dedicated to substantiating theoretical propositions;*

*however, there is no obvious means of deriving from abstract propositions actions relevant to specific circumstances. Even when research is designed to solve a particular problem, it is troubled by the narrow range of selected variables, ambiguities in measurement, conflicts among statistical models, and multiple interpretations of finding, all in a context of continuously fluctuating conditions.*" (Gergen, 2014, p.10) With this said, traditional research looks to be not a trustworthy path to the future. An illustration of an orientation towards *"The best way to predict the future is to create it"* (Gergen, 2014, p.10) seems to be the alternative to traditional practices of scientific management that is provided by scholars at Case Western Reserve, *Appreciative Inquiry*. The sharing of stories replaces the discourse of mutual blame, and generates confidence that a better future may be created. Marshak & Grant (2008) and Marshak & Bushe (2014) herald this different way of looking at research as the 'new wave' in organizational development and call it Dialogical Organization Development. More on Dialogical Organization Development can be found further down this chapter.

Gergen fairly states; *"The potentials of inquiry into future building practices are enormous. However, one limitation of this genre lies in the fact that the capacity for creation remains primarily in the hands of the research community"*. (Gergen, 2014, p.12) But with the communities of practice and, learning communities that arise nowadays (see Reason & Bradbury, 2008) more and more professional fields have launched collaborative action initiatives. (Wamba, 2011) For example shows how teachers are learning how to view their classroom as laboratories for participatory research. And (Gustafson, Finne, & Oscarrson, 2001) show how creating dialogic connections among large institutions of business and government for purposes of broad development can bring entire regions or countries into collaborative inquiry.

*"The three registers of inquiry – liberatory, practice producing, and action centered – illustrate the substantial potentials inherent in a future making orientation to research"* (Gergen, 2014, p.12) And from these three registers I intent to focus on the action centered area by including the practice of *aikido* as almost a new way of action research.

When researchers look at their inquiry only as collected data and form their own view on the problem at hand, or the solution comes from only their own point of view, then there will always be differences in opinion. While, when research is done from a constructionist point of view, all stakeholders get to share their story. All stakeholders are part of the group finding a solution. All of a sudden it is possible to share dreams about the future. Research can then be future forming. *"We are invited to consider two important issues. First, we are invited to question our taken-for-granted ways of understanding research. Second, new ways*



*of engaging in research are opened and thus knowledge production, itself, is reframed.”* (McNamee in Simon & Chard, 2014, p. 75)

I prefer to look at research through the constructionist worldview. By adopting this way of looking at research I realize that research is no longer something I do on my own, but I’m co-creating the process with others (researchers). *“Specifically emphasize action research as a ‘practice of co-operative inquiry’, a domain of practice that researches ‘with people rather than on people”* (Gergen & Gergen, 2008, p. 165). *“Many believe that by emphasizing on ‘with people’ a fundamental understanding of the nature of social research will arise.”* (Bopp & Bopp, 1998; Estava & Prakash, 1998; Pyrch & Castillo, 2001 as quoted by Gergen & Gergen, 2008, p. 165).

All of NOVI’s students are people employed, have fulltime jobs, and are stimulated to do their bachelor research within their own organization. Using a constructionist view of the world in research helps to join the community (the organization) and put emphasis on dialogue within the community. It is then no longer a question of how to become the expert on a certain object of study. At that moment true relational research is done, by joining with the people in creating new futures, new possibilities. *“The focus on relational processes is the hallmark of a constructionist orientation where there is a shift from examining entities (whether they be individuals, groups, organizations or matter) to attending to what we refer to as language or language processes.”* (McNamee in Simon & Chard, 2014, p. 74)

From the chapter on SC we know that in words we create worlds, and this is also part of how AI works, in the Constructionist Principle. I will share more on the principles of AI later in this chapter.

While many have used AI as an approach to organization development, not so much is written on AI as an approach to research. *“Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) first conceptualized and presented AI as a generative approach to research into organizational life”* (Zandee & Cooperrider, 2008, p. 190).

In fact AI was *“an answer to Gergen’s daring invitation (1978, 1994a, 1994b, 1999) to heighten the ‘generative capacity’ of social science research”* (Zandee & Cooperrider, 2008, p. 192).

Ludema & Fry looked at the practice of AI, and walked step-by-step through an AI summit process with a large, North American transportation company, Roadway Express. They said: *“We define AI as a process of collective learning – a way to explore, discover, and appreciate everything that gives ‘life’ to organizations when they are most vibrant, effective, successful and healthy in relation to their whole system of stakeholders”* (Ludema & Fry, 2008, p. 280).

In the process of an AI summit it becomes clear that AI is strength-based. A strength-based approach means that one looks at the strengths first. One does not look at problems and tries to solve those. In an AI summit an inquiry is



started to discover where the strength of the people in the organization are. One of the authors who describes the process of finding the strength in people in the organization is Bushe (2010), he calls the process 'tracking and fanning'. He explains: "*Tracking is, most profoundly, the ability to see what you want more of as already being there. Sometimes you just have to start with a leap of faith*" (Bushe, 2010, p. 218).

Bushe, in both Clear Leadership- and Appreciative Leadership course, talks about tracking as "*Awareness with a purpose*" (2010, p. 222).

After we've discovered what we want more of, in a person, or in a co-creation, in a conversation, or in a research – we can start to fan. "*Fanning is what happens when you fan a small fire and turn it into a roaring blaze*" (Bushe, 2010, p. 222). "*Tracking and fanning are about looking for what you want more of and saying something positive about it whenever you see it*" (Ibid, p. 224).

Through tracking and fanning we can discover the strength in people, and in organizations. Gergen invites us to shift "*from a view of knowledge as propositional, to one of knowledge as praxis*" (Gergen, 2014, p.1).

Looking back at the process of research, described in this dissertation, I have been able to remain open minded both through the praxis of *aikido* and AI. I have not judged any of the people I interviewed. I have not judged the various stories they shared.

Gergen invited us metaphorically speaking "*to close our eyes and begin to imagine the worlds of our hopes*" (Gergen, 2014, p.6).

Within this metaphor we see that "*the aim of research would not be to illuminate what is, but to create what is to become*" (Ibid, p.6).

But we should not embark on a "*disjunctive, imaginary world*" (Ibid, p.9).

It is more a practice of examining current and emerging practices with future forming potential. Cooperrider and Srivastva (1999) talk about changing research from the idea that you can't have 'good science' without stable replication and verification of hypotheses into "*a shift in attention whereby theoretical accounts are no longer judged in terms of their predictive capacity, but instead are judged in terms of their generative capacity*" (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1999, as quoted in Cooperrider et al, 2008, p. 359).

To show what Cooperrider and Srivastva would like to show I've reproduced their table of comparison of logical empiricist and socio-rationalist conceptions of social science:

Table 2: Comparison of Logical Empiricist and Socio-Rationalist Conceptions of Social Science, Cooperrider et al, 2008, p.361

<b>Dimension for Comparison</b>	<b>Logical Empiricism</b>	<b>Socio-Rationalism</b>
1. Primary Function of Science	Enhance goals of understanding, prediction, and control by discerning general laws or principles governing the relationship among units of observable phenomena.	Enhance understanding in the sense of assigning meaning to something, thus creating its status through the use of concepts. Science is a means for expanding flexibility and choice in cultural evolution.
2. Theory of Knowledge and Mind	Exogenic – grants priority to the external world in the generation of human knowledge (i.e. the pre-eminence of objective fact). Mind is a mirror.	Endogenic – holds the processes of mind and symbolic interaction as preeminent source of human knowledge. Mind is both a mirror and a lamp.
3. Perspective on Time	Assumption of temporal irrelevance: searches for transhistorical principles	Assumption of historically and contextually relevant meanings; existing regularities in social order are contingent on prevailing meaning systems.
4. Assuming Stability of Social Patterns	Social phenomena are sufficiently stable, enduring, reliable, and replicable to allow for lawful principles.	Social order is fundamentally unstable. Social phenomena are guided by cognitive heuristics, limited only by the human imagination: the social order is a subject matter capable of infinite variation through the linkage of ideas and action.
5. Value Stance	Separation of fact and values. Possibility of objective knowledge through behavioral observation.	Social sciences are fundamentally non-objective. Any behavioral even is open to virtually any interpretative explanation. All interpretation is filtered through prevailing values of a culture. "There is no description without prescription.
6. Features of "Good" Theory	Discovery of trans historically valid principles; a theory's correspondence with face.	Degree to which theory furnishes alternatives for social innovation and thereby opens vistas for action; expansion of 'the realm of the possible'.
7. Criteria for Confirmation or Verification (Life of a Theory)	Logical consistency and empirical prediction; subject to falsification.	Persuasive appeal, impace, and overall generative capacity; subject to

		community agreement; truth is a product of a community of truth makers.
8. Role of Scientist	Impartial bystander and dispassionate spectator of the inevitable; content to accept that which seems given.	Active agent and co-participant who is primarily a source of linguistic activity (theoretical language), which serves as input into common meaning systems. Interested in “breaking the hammerlock” of what appears as given in human nature.
9. Chief Product of Research	Cumulation of objective knowledge through the production of empirically disconfirmable hypothesis.	Continued improvement in theory building capacity; improvement in the capacity to create generative-theoretical language.
10. Emphasis in the Education of Future Social Science Professionals	Rigorous experimental methods and statistical analysis; a premium is placed on method (training in theory construction is a rarity).	Hermeneutic interpretation and catalytic theorizing; a premium is placed on the theoretical imagination. Sociorationalism invites the student toward intellectual expression in the service of his or her vision of the good.

If Cooperrider and Srivastva intended AI to be a possible answer to Gergen’s (1987) invitation to create a generative action-research approach, then I’d like to show how AI could be a possible answer to Gergen’s later invitation (2014) to make research future forming. Next chapter is on Dialogic Research.

## Dialogical Research

I've been teaching qualitative research methods to the Bachelor and Master students for both commercial and noncommercial universities in the Netherlands. These methods are all based on a traditional approach to research. To me, this is like living in two worlds. The world where I'm teaching, in which the students ask me questions like: 'I have this problem at work, and I want to do my research on that. Is that possible?' Or 'we can't seem to get everyone in the organization to go with the change we (management team) want to see! How can we get people to go with what we want?'

In AI we work with principles, which are to be explained later in this chapter. From these principles and social constructionism we learn that reality and identity are co-created, and that words create worlds. That reality is constructed through language. We learn that we have a habit of seeing things through our experiences. We learn that in order to develop an appreciative eye, we need to find what we want more of. We learn that whatever we focus on, will grow. So when students put a lot of focus on the problems in the organization, then these problems will grow. *"I'm tired of old research designs being repeated so many times that we think they are real – we forget we made them up!"* (St Pierre, 2010, as quoted by Simon in Simon & Chard, 2014, p 4)

That is why, in this research, I'm not putting a lot of focus on research methods that are deficit based. In this dissertation I put focus on research in a future forming direction. And with that I focus on what Simon and Chard (2014) call a *systemic, dialogical, social constructionist perspective*.

I would like to explain these words as follows: *"Regarding a systemic approach Robert Flood argues that: "We can only meaningfully understand ourselves by understanding the whole of which we are an integral part. Systemic thinking is the discipline which makes visible that our actions are inter-related to other people's actions in patterns of behavior and are not merely isolated events."* (Flood, 1999, p.2 as quoted by Chard in Simon & Chard, 2014, p. 31-32)

And *"Social construction as theory holds that our understandings of the world are constructed through language and within our interactions with others."* (Burr, 1995, as quoted by Chard in Simon & Chard, 2014, p. 32)

We see these words back in the principles of AI where the Constructionist Principle says that reality and identity are co-created. And in the same principle it is stated that words create worlds. Also the Narrative Principle is in line with the systemic way of thinking, where we see that we construct stories about our lives and state that stories are transformative.

Bushe and Marshak (2009) suggest *"There appears to be a rather large gulf between academics who study change from narrative and interpretive premises and ... practitioners who use dialogical methods"* (p.362, as quoted by Oliver in Simon & Chard, 2014, p. 266)

*"The goal in a dialogical research process is to identify narratives and patterns of communication collaboratively, with relevant system members, for the benefit of system development."* (Marshak & Bushe, 2012; Oliver & Fitzgerald, 2012) (as quoted by Oliver in Simon & Chard, 2014, p. 267)

In sharing stories, which is what happens in working with AI, we see that the narratives or the language becomes important. Or, perhaps I should say that we become aware of the importance of language. Simon and Chard's systemic, dialogical, social constructionist perspective is based on this working with narratives. *"The shift in postmodern systemic practice away from a model based on a one-sided embodiment of professional expertise to a model of collaborative inquiry (Anderson & Goolishian, 1992), a shared process of reflection (Andersen, 1987) invited systemic practitioners into a reflexive process in which all theories, personal, professional, cultural beliefs etc. are open to review."* (Simon in Simon & Chard, 2014, p. 7) I would like to share some thoughts on Dialogic Organization Development now.

## Dialogic Organization Development

It would be interesting to see how research can be future forming for organizations. In the –Delivering the Future – section, in the second person research, I'll talk about how AI and its future forming research approach can help organizations like NOVI University of Applied Sciences and the BedrijfsAikido group. Cooperrider says: *"Perhaps the most important thing we do as leaders and consultants is inquiry"* (Cooperrider, et al 2008, p 103). To me there is a thin line separating research and organization development work.

Bushe and Marshak (2009) talk about Dialogic Organization Development as a form of organization development that works with the principles that build social constructionism. Working with a Dialogic OD mind-set is based on the principle that reality and relationships are socially constructed. Organizations are meaning making systems, and language is seen as broadly defining matters. Creating change requires changing conversations, and groups are self-organizing. Like in action-research, the researcher, or the consultant, is part of the process. Dialogic OD can be the link between research as creative construction (Gergen, 2014) and the creation of new practices and collaborative action that pushes research in a future forming direction.

The table below summarizes some of the broader differences between Diagnostic and Dialogic OD:

Table 3: Differences between Diagnostic and Dialogic OD (Bushe & Marshak, 2009)

	<b>Diagnostic OD</b>	<b>Dialogic OD</b>
Influenced by	Classical science, positivism, and modernist philosophy	Interpretive approaches, social constructionism, critical and postmodern philosophy
Dominant Organizational Construct	Organizations are like living systems	Organizations are meaning making systems
Ontology and Epistemology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reality is an objective fact</li> <li>- There is a single reality</li> <li>- Truth is transcendent and discoverable</li> <li>- Reality can be discovered using rational and analytic processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reality is socially constructed</li> <li>- There are multiple realities</li> <li>- Truth is immanent and emerges from the situation</li> <li>- Reality is negotiated and may involve power and political processes</li> </ul>
Constructs of Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Usually Teleological</li> <li>- Collecting and applying valid data using objective problem-solving methods leads to change</li> <li>- Change can be created, planned and managed</li> <li>- Change is episodic, linear, and goal oriented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Often Dialogical or Dialectical</li> <li>- Creating containers and processes to produce generative ideas leads to change</li> <li>- Change can be encouraged but is mainly self-organizing</li> <li>- Change may be continuous and/or cyclical</li> </ul>
Focus of Change	Emphasis on changing behavior and what people do.	Emphasis on changing mindsets and what people think.

The key premises of the Dialogic OD stated in table 4 below:

Table 4: Premises of Dialogic OD (Bushe & Marshak, 2014)

Reality and relationships are socially constructed
Organizations are meaning making systems
Language broadly defines matters
Creating change requires changing conversations
Structure participative inquiry and engagement to increase differentiation before seeking coherence
Groups and organizations are continuously self-organizing
Transformational change is more emergent than planned
Consultants are a part of the process, not apart from the process.

Within Dialogic Organization Development the emphasis is on changing the mind-set. It is still possible to work with methods like AI, coming from a more Diagnostic approach, but like Bushe and Marshak, I suspect that changing mind-set and what people think is the key to making change transformational. In research, changing mind-sets and what people think is also key to making research transformational – to make research future forming. I will talk more about this and specifically how to do it in the –Designing the future- section. However, here I'd like to start introducing AI and answering one of the guiding questions for this research: 'What is *Appreciative Inquiry*?'



## Appreciative Inquiry

I am taking a lot of space to describe AI, due to the idea that this approach is part of what I'm researching, it is the research model, and the researchers used it in their own research. I will talk about AI in the various forms that are created during the years.

Appreciative Inquiry is a form of "*Social construction in action*" (Reed, 2007, p.viii). Part of this is due to the fact that some of the base principles of AI have their origin in social constructionism. But more important is that in AI there is an emphasis on language or narrative practices. Much is written about AI as a method of organization transformation (Cooperrider, Whitney & Stavros, 2008; Ludema, Whitney, Mohr & Griffin, 2003; Gergen & Gergen, 2008; Barrett & Fry, 2008; Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005; Lewis, Passmore & Cantore, 2008; Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003). However, little has been written about AI as a research method (Reed, 2007).

Cooperrider and his faculty mentor Srivastva (1987) developed AI in the early 80s. They were doing organization development work with the Cleveland Clinic in Cleveland, Ohio, and realized what power the questions had they were using. If one notices the power of questions, it is easy to realize that whatever we give attention to gets bigger. So asking questions about what works will put the attention on to what works. Furthermore questions about problems will put attention to problems. From this perspective an inquiry becomes an *Appreciative Inquiry* when one focuses on what works.

*"Appreciative Inquiry is a collaborative and highly participatory, system-wide approach to seeking, identifying, and enhancing the 'life-giving forces' that are present when a system is performing optimally in human, economic, and organizational terms"* (Watkins & Mohr, 2001, p.14).

*"More than a method or technique, the appreciative mode of inquiry is a way of living with, being with, and directly participating in the varieties of social organization we are compelled to study"* (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1999 as quoted in Cooperrider et al, 2008, p. 354).

Cooperrider and Srivastva worked with four guiding principles that directed their work in the beginning. I have created this mind-map, based on their article written in 1999, quoted in Cooperrider et al, 2008, p. 377 – 378:

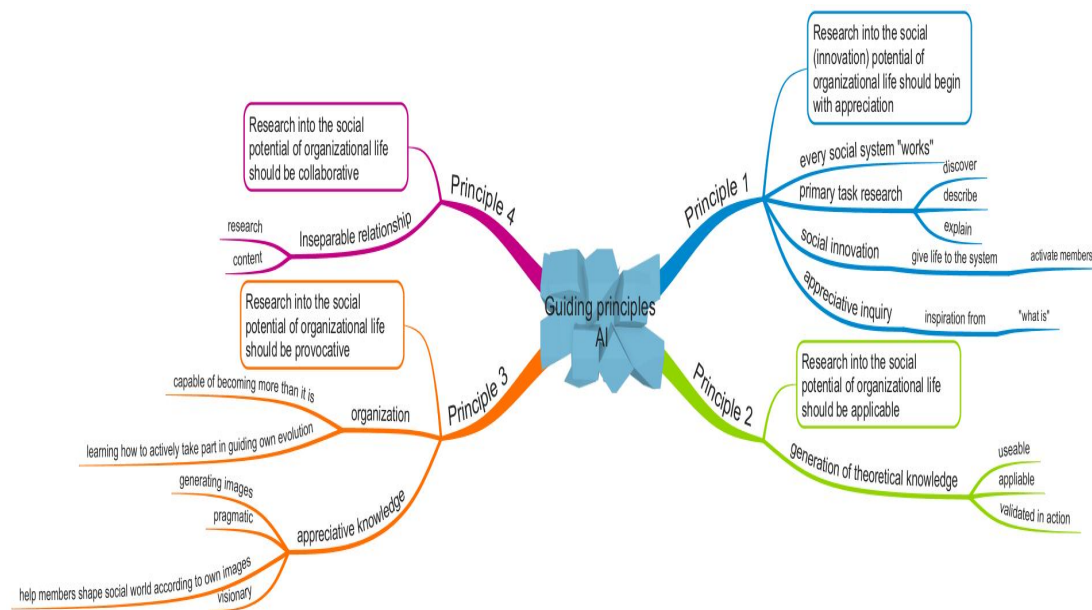


Figure 6: Principles of AI in the beginning

In Cooperrider et al, 2008 a mini-lecture is given on the five principles of AI, which I will talk about in this chapter (2.5.2). They say that in order to fully grasp AI theory it is important to understand the principles.

Bushe (2013) says that for the first 15 years after the publication of his first 1987 paper on *Appreciative Inquiry*, Cooperrider resisted calls to write a book on how to do it. Instead he wanted people to focus on the principles of the model and encouraged widespread innovation in methods (Ibid). In the Dutch AI community there is however a great focus on the 4-D cycle. This is probably due to the fact that most organizations that invite AI-consultants to work with them on organization transformation are looking for structure and the 4-D cycle is providing structure.

Bushe says about AI: “*Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a method for studying and changing social systems (groups, organizations, communities) that advocates collective inquiry into the best of what is in order to imagine what could be, followed by collective design of a desired future state that is compelling and thus, does not require the use of incentives, coercion or persuasion for planned change to occur*” (Bushe, 2013, p.1).

Gergen explain AI as follows: “*Drawing from narrative and constructionist ideas, they (scholars at Case Western Reserve) created an alternative to traditional practices of scientific management. The tradition of gathering systematic data on organizational functioning, from which executives should derive optimal decisions, had always been precarious. In this contrasting orientation, organizational participants collectively determine the optimal course of organizational*

development (Cooperrider et al, 1999; Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). This practice, called *Appreciative Inquiry* first gives expression to the individual stories of organizational participants, and from these expressions, locates common values. From these values, new directions for the organization are derived, and new policies and practices put in place.” (Gergen, 2014, p.11).

### Appreciative Inquiry’s 4-D framework

I look at the 4-D framework as a sort of standard structure that can help in a process to keep track of where you’re going.

The 4-D Appreciative Inquiry framework (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavos, 2003, p.30) consists of:

1. Discovery; what gives life?
2. Dream; what might be?
3. Design; how can it be?
4. Destiny; what will be?

In a picture this looks like:



Source: Cooperrider et al

Figure 7: AI framework from Cooperrider et al, 2003

Below the phases are explained in more depth. The principles that will be explained later in this chapter are very important. What I’ve noticed in The Netherlands, while doing AI Summits, is that people tend to focus on the 4-D cycle, and ‘forget’ about the principles. That in it self, to me, limits the creation of generative research or change.

### **Appreciative Inquiry's Discovery phase**

*"The purpose of the discovery phase is to search for, highlight, and illuminate those factors that give life to the organization, the 'best of what is' in any given situation"* (Ludema & Fry, 2008, p. 283).

AI conversations and interviews form the heart of the Discovery phase.

Interview questions should:

- Be surprising,
- Touch peoples' hearts and souls,
- Encourage sharing and listening to stories and experiences that enhance relationships,
- Force us to look at reality a little differently.

(Slack & Bush, n.d.)

When holding interviews a script should be used to help people who are not familiar with AI to be a great listener and a great storyteller. For the one asking the questions, it is important to be curious; allow for silence and thinking time.

*"Perhaps, the most important thing we do as leaders and consultants is inquiry. We read situations; we do organizational analysis and diagnosis. It all starts with inquiry. The key point is that the way we know is fateful. The questions we ask, the things that we choose to focus on, and the topics we choose to ask questions about determine what we find. What we find becomes the data and the story out of which we dialogue about and envision the future. And so the seeds of change are implicit in the very first questions we ask. Inquiry is intervention."* (Cooperrider, in Cooperrider et al, 2008, p. 103).

In the Discovery phase we work with The Constructionist, Simultaneity and Positive principle. The principles are explained in detail later in chapter 2.5.2.

The questions used, should inquire into *"the clients' strengths, abilities, dreams and hopes.* (Combs & Freedman, 1990; Flaskas et al, 2007; O'Hanlon et al, 1998; Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987, as quoted by Simon in Simon & Chard, 2014, p. 6).

## Generic questions

In AI a set of generic questions is used, that work as a base for any interview and that are tailor made for each of the processes (Cooperrider et al., 2008).

There are four base areas to address, which are shown in the mind-map below:

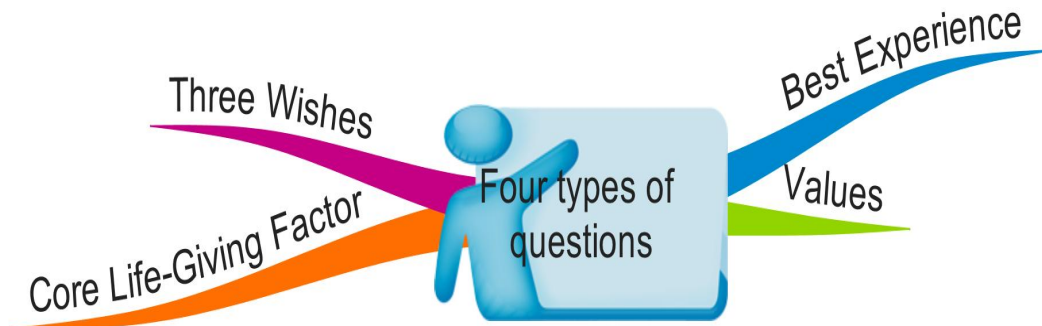


Figure 8: Generic Questions

Questions in the Best Experience area are focused around the following questions:

- Tell me a story about the best times that you have had with your organization (team, family, community, network, or other group). Looking at your entire experience, recall a time when you felt most alive or most excited about your involvement. What made it an exciting experience? Who else was involved? Describe the event in detail.

The questions in the Values area are focused around the following questions:

- What are things you value about yourself, your work, and your organization?
- Yourself. Without being humble, what do you value most about yourself – as a human being, friend, parent, citizen, and so on?
- Your work. When you are feeling best about work, what do you value about it?
- Your organization. What is it about your organization (team, family, community, network, or other group) that you value? What is the single most important thing that your organization has contributed to your life?

The questions in the Core life-giving factor area are focused around the following questions:

- What do you think is the core value or factor that allows the organization to pull through during difficult times?
- If this core value or factor did not exist, how would that make your organization totally different than it currently is?

The questions in the Three Wishes area are focused around the following question:

- If you had three wishes for this organization, what would they be? (Mohr & Watkins, 2002, p.6)

### Appreciative Inquiry's Dream phase

The Dream phase is the place where people get the opportunity to identify their dreams for what the research is about. So while at the Discovery phase one has discovered 'what is best', they now have the chance to project it into their wishes, hopes and aspirations for the future. *"The second phase is to dream about what could be. When the best of what is has been identified, the mind naturally begins to search beyond this; it begins to envision new possibilities"* (Ludema & Fry, 2008, p. 283).

Perhaps this is the phase that makes AI a good research method to make research future forming.

The principles used in the Dream phase are The Anticipatory, Poetic and Positive Principle. I will talk more about the principles later in this chapter. *"One of the basic theorems of the theory of image is that it is the image which in fact determines what might be called the current behavior of any organization. The image acts as a field. The behavior consists of gravitating toward the most highly valued part of the field"* (Kenneth Boulding, in Cooperrider et al, 2008, p. 129).

In the Dream phase there are various goals. The first one is to facilitate a dialogue among stakeholders. In this dialogue we seek to share stories. Sharing stories that talk about best experience, values, core life-giving factors, wishes and in this case impact, will allow the stakeholders to start thinking about 'what is' and appreciate that. Another goal for the Dream phase is to ask the people who shared their stories in the Discovery phase to share these stories with the entire group. By sharing the stories the group of stakeholders will be able to see the common themes. By searching for the common themes, the group will start having conversations about different themes than normally found in organizations. Because of the appreciative questions, attention is focused on the best experience, values, core life-giving factors and wishes, so the conversations change. *"The Dream phase is the time to push the creative edges of positive possibilities and to **wonder** about the organization's greatest potential"* (Cooperrider et al, 2008, p.132).

To help people 'wonder', here are some sample dream questions:

- *It is the year 2015, and you have just awakened from a long sleep. As you look around, you see the world just as you always wished and dreamed it would be.*
- *What is happening? How is the world different? How is your organization contributing to this new world? What are you doing that makes a difference?*
- *As you reflect on the industry and business environment in which your organization works, what do you see as the two or three most significant macro trends emerging? How might they change the way your industry and business operate? In your opinion, what are the most exciting strategic opportunities on the horizon for your organization?*

- *Imagine that it is 2015 and your organization has just won an award as the outstanding socially responsible business of the year. What is said about your organization as the award is dedicated? What are customers saying? What are employees saying? What did it take to win the award?*

(Cooperrider et al, 2008, p. 135)

With the sharing of stories, from the Discovery phase, and the sharing of dreams from the Dream phase it is time to move to the next phase, the Design phase.



### **Appreciative Inquiry's Design phase**

The Design phase is the place where one determines 'what should be'. This is where provocative propositions are developed as intentions to support the structures and systems needed for a successful destiny phase. *"The third phase is to design the future through dialogue. Once people's hopes and dreams have been articulated, the task is to design the organization's social architecture – norms, values, structures, strategies, systems, patterns of relationships, ways of doing things – that can bring the dreams to life"* (Ludema & Fry, 2008, p. 283).

One of the great tools to use in this phase is SOAR (Stavros & Hinrichs, 2009), which will be discussed in detail in this chapter.

*"Organizational transformation is much more than the critical mass of personal transformation. It requires macro level changes in the very fabric of organizing, the social architecture"* (Diana Whitney in Cooperrider et al, 2008, p. 161).

In many of the organization development processes organizations complain about how they miss the result orientation. In AI that is what happens in the Design phase. *"The designing start by crafting provocative propositions. Sometimes referred to as possibility propositions, they bridge "the best of what is" (identified in Discovery) with "what might be" (imagined in Dream)"* (Cooperrider et al, 2008, p. 162).

In order to start designing first we must select designing elements. One of the tools to select these elements is McKinsey's 7-S model (Waterman & Peters, 1980); the NOVI Bachelor students often use this model. However, the following methods have proven to work effectively from the appreciative perspective:

- The Conference Method (Axelrod, 1999)
- Participative Design Workshop (Emery, 1993)
- Open Space (Owens, 1992)
- Whole System Design (Mohr & Levine, 1998)
- The ABC Model (Watkins & Cooperrider, 2000)
- Future Search (Weisbord, 1994)
- World Café (Brown, Isaacs, & The World Café Community, 2005)
- The Appreciative Inquiry Summit (Whitney & Cooperrider, 2000)

(Magruder Watkins, Mohr & Kelly, 2011, p. 240)

Cooperrider et al provide a list with Design elements to consider when designing a social architecture:



Table 5: Design elements from Cooperrider et al, 2008, p. 164

Alliances and Partnerships	Beliefs about Power and Authority	Brand Identity
Business Models	Business Processes	Communication
Competencies	Culture	Customer Relations
Distribution of Wealth	Ecological/Environmental	Education/Training
Governance Structure	Knowledge of Management System	Leadership
Management Practices	Market Opportunities	New Products
Policies	Practices and Principles	Relationships
Results	Shared Values	Social Responsibility
Societal Purposes	Staff / People	Stakeholder Relations
Strategy	Structure	Systems
Technology	Vision and Purpose	

In the Design phase, all stakeholders make a provocative proposition. This bridges the best of 'what is' and 'what might be'. *"Provocative propositions provide a clear, shared vision for the organization's destiny"* (Cooperrider et al, 2008, p.168). *"Provocative propositions are a key part of the AI design stage and emerge from themes appearing in the dream stage. They're also called 'positive' or 'future' statements. They're uplifting statements about how an organization, community or group goes forward, co-designs and co-create its future.*

*From the Design phase we go into the last of the phases, the Destiny, Delivery or Deploy phase."* (Slack & Bush, n.d.)

Examples of a provocative proposition (Slack & Bush, n.d.):

"We – the people of this organization – consistently find, express, and share PASSION for our work!"

WE are appreciated!

WE make a difference!

The provocative proposition for this research is: Appreciative Inquiry makes Research Future Forming!

### **Appreciative Inquiry's Delivery/Destiny/Deploy phase**

*"A Destiny phase, sometimes called the Delivery phase (and more recently the Deploy phase), during which the organization evolves into the preferred future image created during the Dream phase, using the work done in the design phase" (Magruder Watkins, Mohr & Kelly, 2011, p. 37).*

*"The final phase, destiny, is an invitation to construct the future through innovation and action" (Ludema & Fry, 2008, p. 283).*

This is the phase where the Bachelor students at NOVI planned their conclusions and remarks.

In later articles Cooperrider described this as the Deploy phase where results are created. Initiatives and action plans are done, and post-summit momentum is kept. I want to use the word Delivery in this dissertation since I feel it fits best when using AI as a method of research. *"Allow yourself to dream and you will discover that destiny is yours to design"* (Jackie Stavros in Cooperrider et al, 2008, p. 199).

The main goal in the Delivery phase is to ensure that the dream can be realized. This phase is about publicly declaring intended actions and asking for support. In this phase people plan action, develop implementation strategies and get commitment. To make sure that people understand that AI can be integrated into business operations Cooperrider et al provided a table with areas for integrating AI into Business Operations:

Table 6: Areas for integrating from Cooperrider et al, 2008, p. 206

Organization Design	Communication; Architecture; Joint Ventures; Strategic Alliances
Employee satisfaction	Employee Orientation; Staffing & Development; Coaching, Diversity initiatives
Process Improvement	Work Process Redesign; Continuous Quality Improvement; Benchmarking, Innovations
Learning & Development	Supervisory Development; Leadership & Management Development; Team Development; Training
Measurement	Performance Management; Metric Standards; Reward & Recognition, Surveys
Customer Satisfaction	Focus Groups & Surveys; Customer Feedback; Supplier Feedback Systems; Public Relations
Planning	Strategic; Business; Operations; Marketing

## The Principles in Appreciative Inquiry

AI, with its base in Social Constructionism has principles outlining what AI is. These principles are to be seen as guidelines, or better, language. Cooperrider and Srivastva have given a list of four principles that they used in the beginning while creating AI. I created a mind-map, with these starting principles, which is shared as figure 5 in this dissertation.

From these four starting principles they created the five principles that inspired and moved the foundation of AI from theory to practice (Cooperrider et al, 2008, p. 8):

1. The Constructionist Principle
2. The Principle of Simultaneity
3. The Poetic Principle
4. The Anticipatory Principle
5. The Positive Principle.

Later, AI consultants started adding to the principles to reflect new learning and thinking. Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2003, pp. 54-55) proposed three additional principles: the Wholeness Principle, the Enactment Principle, and the Free Choice Principle and made an expanded summary of eight principles of AI:

Table 7: principles of AI (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003, p. 54-55)

Principle	Definition
The Constructionist Principle	<i>Words Create Worlds</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reality, as we know it, is a subjective vs. objective state</li> <li>- It is socially created, through language and conversations</li> </ul>
The Simultaneity Principle	<i>Inquiry Creates Change</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inquiry is intervention.</li> <li>- The moment we ask a question, we begin to create a change.</li> </ul>
The Poetic Principle	<i>We Can Choose What We Study</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organizations, like open books, are endless sources of study and learning.</li> <li>- What we choose to study makes a difference. It describes, even creates, the world, as we know it.</li> </ul>
The Anticipatory Principle	<i>Images Inspires Action</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Human systems move in the direction of their images of the future.</li> <li>- The more positive and hopeful the image of the future, the more positive the present-day action.</li> </ul>
The Positive Principle	<i>Positive Questions Lead to Positive Change.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Momentum for large-scale change requires large amounts of positive affect and social bonding.</li> <li>- This momentum is best generated through positive questions that amplify the positive core.</li> </ul>
The Wholeness Principle	<i>Wholeness Brings Out the Best</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wholeness brings out the best in people and organizations.</li> <li>- Bringing all stakeholders together in large group forums stimulates creativity and builds collective capacity.</li> </ul>

The Enactment Principle	<i>Acting "As If" Is Self-Fulfilling</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To really make a change, we must "be the change we want to see".</li> <li>- Positive change occurs when the process used to create the change is a living model of the ideal future.</li> </ul>
The Free Choice Principle	<i>Free Choice Liberates Power</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- People perform better and are more committed when they have freedom to choose how and what they contribute.</li> <li>- Free choice stimulates organizational excellence and positive change.</li> </ul>

In addition, Frank Barrett and Ron Fry proposed to add the Narrative Principle (2010). Barrett and Fry wrote a Dutch book, in 2010, called *Appreciative Inquiry – het basiswerk*. I have used this version to explain the Narrative Principle they have added to the list of principles. To them the Narrative Principle is about the sharing of stories. They say that stories bond. They say that stories give meaning to our life and that sharing stories creates a connection between people. They invite the reader to start a meeting in a different way, next time. When we ask our fellow meeting members to tell a story of the best that happened to you since the last meeting, they promise that the meeting will be totally different from the former ones. They also promise that the commitment of the people in the meeting will grow.

Finally, Jackie Stavros and Cheri Torres recommend adding the Awareness Principle (2005). *"If you want to experience dynamic relationships in the appreciative paradigm, you need to practice living the AI principles with self-reflective awareness of the significance of not only your actions and the actions of others, but also the many possibilities for how the interactions can play out."* (p. 78-79) *"Practicing self-reflective awareness is that you discover that your beliefs and your words have a significant impact on others."* (p. 79)

Stavros and Torres wanted to add the Awareness Principle to help deepen the other principles. Below the principles are shared in depth.

### **Appreciative Inquiry's Constructionist Principle**

The Constructionist Principle says, *"The seeds of organizational change are implicit in the first questions asked"* (Cooperrider et al., 2008, p.8).

Kelm (2005) says that the Constructionist Principle conceptually underlies the other principles and that *"The essential premise is that life experience doesn't just happen to us, we actually create it together"* (p.9).

Reed (2007) confirms that this principle is related to social constructionist theory (Gergen, 1982: 1999) and the idea that our thoughts about the world are developed through interpretation and construction, rather than merely the simple recording of phenomena (Reed, 2007, p. 26).

Bushe (2013) proposes, *"What we believe to be true determines what we do"* (p.2). He says, *"the purpose of inquiry is to stimulate new ideas, stories and images that generate new possibilities for action"* (p.2). Kelm (2005) added Anderson's explanation at the Constructionist Principle: *"We are in continuous conversation with each other and with ourselves. Through conversation we form and reform our life experiences and events; we create and recreate our meanings and understanding; and we construct and reconstruct our realities and ourselves. Some conversations enhance possibility; others diminish it"* (Anderson, 1997, as quoted by Kelm, 2005, p. 10). Stavros and Torres (2005) explain the Constructionist Principle as: *"Understanding and making sense of our experiences impacts our decisions and our actions"* (p. 53). Kelm (2005) has written a pioneering look at the AI principles (p. 5) and for the Constructionist Principle she puts emphasis on the following items: -Reality is co-created, - Truth is local, -We see things as we are, - We are deeply inter-connected, - Words create worlds. Stavros and Torres (2005) say: *"We are always co-creating our communities and organizations through our relationships, our actions, and the norms we establish. Subtle changes in actions, like body language, word choice, or intonation, result in changes in our relationships and potentially the entire community"* (p. 53).

I have created a mind-map on the Constructionist Principle from the writings of Kelm (2005), Stavros & Torres (2005), Barrett & Fry (2005, 2010), Cooperrider et al (2008), and Whitney & Trosten-Bloom (2003).

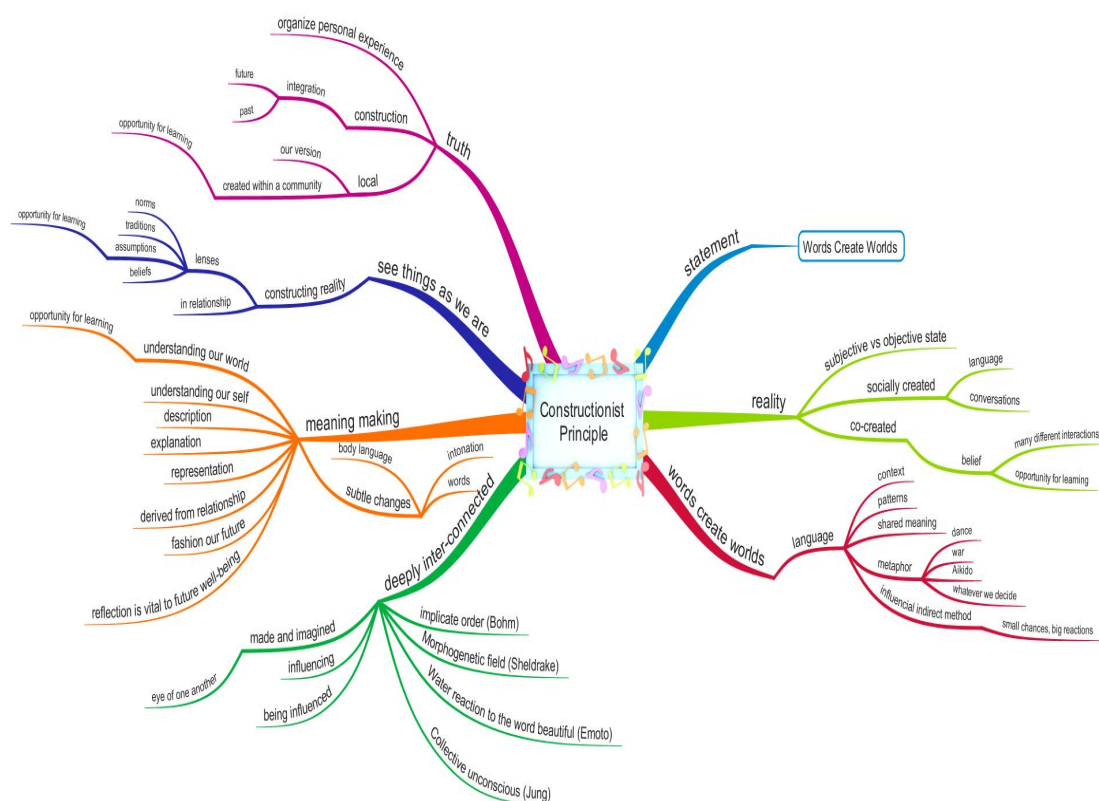


Figure 9: Mind-map on Constructionist Principle

For me, during the research and in the interviews I've had with the researchers, the Constructionist Principle has been of tremendous importance. I have been aware of the construction of language that was different with the various communities that I involved in my research. At the NOVI University of Applied Sciences most of the students I work with are men who work in IT functions or in IT organizations mostly. They form a different community than for example the TAOS Ph.D. researchers who are all involved in areas where much attention is given to language. But also I see a difference on how the construction of language is used in *aikido*. I will talk about that later in this chapter. I've become more and more aware of the reasoning behind this principle that we, ourselves, create the reality of life. Through the words we use, and the decisions we make on how to interpret these words (through meaning making) we can choose what reality looks like. For me, that means that I try to be aware and stay in the state of *Shizentai*. Through being in that state I can open my mind better to the realities of others. In the case of this research I can open my mind to the realities of the researchers. I will share the practice later in this chapter.

Kelm has created a set of Appreciative Living cards that have a quote on the one side and a question or task on the other side. I've used these cards to reflect on each of the principles.

For the Constructionist Principles I took a card with a quote by Barry Kaughman, from *"Happiness is a Choice"*:

*"We are the architects of our own attitudes and experiences. We design the world by the way we choose to see it!"*

The following task is on the other side of the card:

*"Think about the times in your life when you are happiest. What is going on during these moments, and what are you thinking? Are there any patterns? What can you apply from these insights to other areas of your life to make them more joyful?"*

My answer is: Times in my life when I'm happiest is when I'm doing research. I love the opportunity to create new meaning through having conversations with researchers. This can be in the classroom, but it can also be on the *aikido*-mat. Being in conversation with others, and the realization that at the moment of conversation new realities are created show me how research as creative construction works. I see how the various ways of finding words, discussing the various meaning of the words. It is all done in the conversation. *Aikido*, to me, is all about having a conversation on the mat. If I think about an area that I'm not very confident it would be the classroom, with a new group of students. And I realize that when I start looking at teaching as another way of having conversations, then it'll be so much more inspiring. When we all become aware of how reality is created through conversation this could mean that even in conflict, we can realize that by creating a different use of words we can take a first step in finding a better way to work with each other. In *aikido* we call that 'the way of harmony'.



## Appreciative Inquiry's Principle of Simultaneity

This principle points to the way that inquiry and change are simultaneous; in other words, they are not separate and sequential stages in development. An inquiry is an intervention in the way it stimulates reflection and thought that lead to different ways of thinking and doing (Reed, 2007, p.26).

Bushe (2013) talks about how we inquire into human systems and how that changes the systems and provides for further opportunities of change. With the system we mean for example the organization, or the team that we work in. But it can also be the group of people we meet on the mat to train with in our favorite sport.

The Simultaneity Principle talks about how inquiry is an intervention. From the moment we ask a question, we begin to create change.

I have created a mind-map on the Principle of Simultaneity from the writings of Kelm (2005), Stavros & Torres (2005), Barrett & Fry (2005, 2010), Cooperrider et al (2008), and Whitney & Trosten-Bloom (2003).

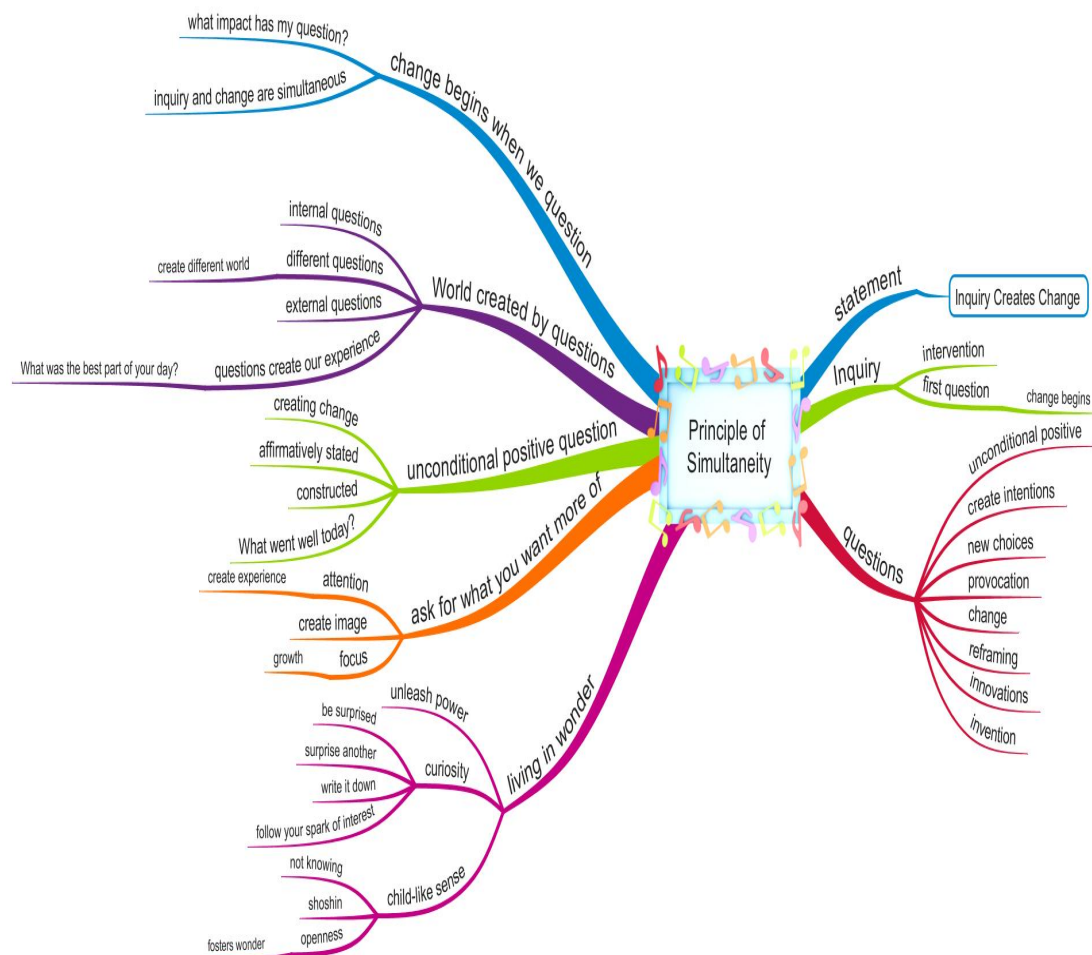


Figure 10: Mind-map on Principle of Simultaneity



In research the asking of questions is an important part of the inquiry process. At NOVI University of Applied Sciences I discovered how many of the students were looking at the process of interviewing as something that was just taking a lot of time in their work. Through talking to them during the Research Module I was able to show them how asking questions can be fun. I've explained to them how their questions, if they are created from the state of *Shizentai*, with curiosity can create a total different research project. When they started to look at the interviewing process with curiosity they discovered that they were 'allowed' to ask questions. When they started asking questions they could not stop! And the people who were asked for answers felt great, because finally someone was listening. So now, after the Research classes most of the NOVI students like to create their interview questions. I put a lot of emphasis on the creation of questions during the research process, because I've realized that asking questions is the starting point of changing the process.

For the principle of Simultaneity I have chosen the Appreciative Living card with Socrates' quote: "*Wisdom begins in wonder.*" Kelm put the following questions on the back:

*"What do you wonder about? What are you curious about? Keep an on-going list and explore a new item each month, or as you feel inspired to do so."*

I always try to help students see the importance of curiosity, by asking them questions and inviting them to do the same. That way they can start developing their sense of wonder.

## Appreciative Inquiry's Poetic Principle

This principle emphasizes the way that people author their world continually, choosing the parts of their stories they are most interested in at the time and experimenting with different “plotlines” (Reed, 2007, p.26). Bushe (2013) says that the poetic principle proposes that organizational life is expressed in the stories people tell each other every day, and the story of the organization is constantly being co-authored (p.2).

I have created a mind-map on the Poetic Principle from the writings of Kelm (2005), Stavros & Torres (2005), Barrett & Fry (2005, 2010), Cooperrider et al (2008), and Whitney & Trosten-Bloom (2003).

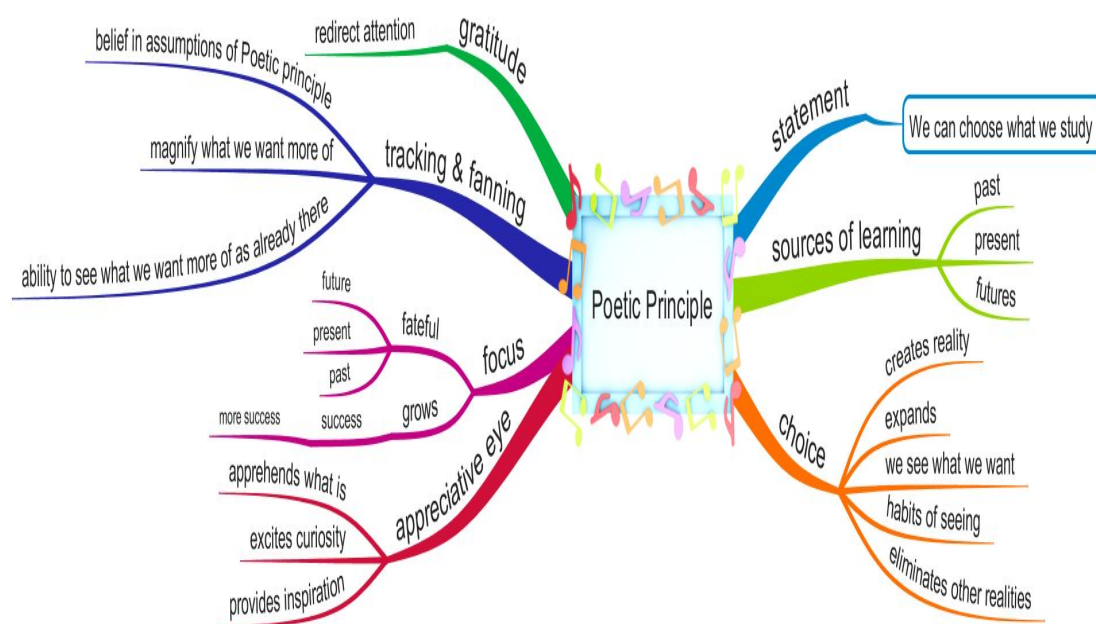


Figure 11: Mind-map on Poetic Principle

Students do not always see that we can all choose what we study. This seems to be due to how organizational structures are built and what organizational cultures arise from this culture. But when focusing on what we want more of, the creation of a research theme is much easier. The manager, who is often the client asking for the research, can start tracking and fanning to help the student to make choices that allow innovation, and make research future forming.

For the Poetic Principle I have chosen the Appreciative Living card with Ralph Charell's quote: *"Nobody exceeds beyond his or her wildest expectations, unless he or she begins with some wild expectations."* Kelm put the following questions on the back of the card:

*“The only limits we have are our beliefs of what’s possible. Reflect briefly on your year ahead and imagine the best it could possibly turn out. Then close your eyes and take ten minutes to imagine something even better”.*

I love this exercise! I can keep doing this over and over. I think it has to do with my Futuristic talent. Whenever there is an opportunity I teach this to my students as well. For many of the IT people this is rather a difficult technique, they feel awkward sitting in the classroom with their eyes closed. So I tell them to do it at home, before they start on their research. I tell them to keep thinking about what it is they want more of, not only when choosing a theme for their research, but for all of the projects they work on.

## Appreciative Inquiry's Anticipatory Principle

This principle suggests, *"The way people think about the future will shape the way they move toward the future"* (Reed, 2007, p.27).

Bushe (2013) says, *"This principle posits that, what we do today is guided by our image of the future"* (p.2).

I have created a mind-map on the Anticipatory Principle from the writings of Kelm (2005), Stavros & Torres (2005), Barrett & Fry (2005, 2010), Cooperrider et al (2008), and Whitney & Trosten-Bloom (2003).

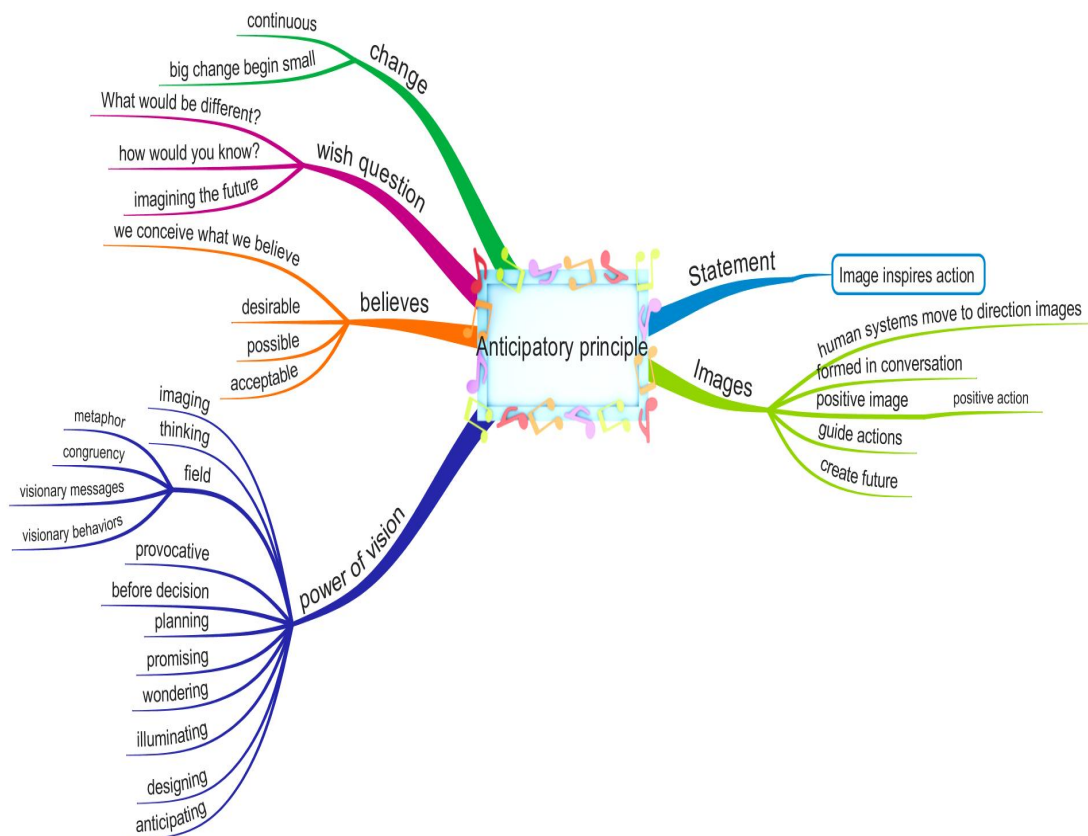


Figure 12: Mind-map on Anticipatory Principle

Looking at the anticipatory principle I realize that before starting a new project, or a research I always ask the stakeholders to meet prior to starting the 'normal' steps and talk about expectations for the project. In the case of the NOVI students this is part of the Research module and takes place in the classroom. Personally I like to draw an Appreciative Living card (Kelm) at the start of a new project. One of the cards perfect for the start of a project has the following quote: *"If you don't know where you are going, you'll end up some place else"* (Yogi Berra). The question or task at the other side of the card says:

*"Select an event or activity you have coming up in the next week.  
Take 5 minutes to close your eyes and imagine it going perfectly.  
Notice how this makes a difference in what actually happens."*

During the process of research I have done this practice many times. For example just before having an interview with one of the researchers, but also shortly before the AI summit at NOVI. And still, now at the final stages of the writing I'm practicing the technique.

I realize how the positive images I choose can help to create positive futures. I also realize that whatever I believe, I conceive. So in order to make decisions on what to do during a research project it is important to keep an open mind and look at the opportunities. From the Anticipatory Principle we learn that big change begins small. So through looking at the language used in a group, or an organization we can create change, with changing small use of words. This principle shows how big the potential of using AI as research approach can be.

### Appreciative Inquiry's Positive Principle

This principle suggests, “A focus on asking positive questions (as in AI) engages people more deeply, and for a longer time” (Reed, 2007, p.27).

Bushe (2013) says, “This principle proposes that momentum and sustainable change requires positive affect and social bonding” (p.2).

With this principle most of the Bachelor students were triggered to start thinking about using AI in their work. Some commented that they were tired of having to talk about problems all day. They wanted something new. They wanted something positive.

Frederickson (2009) talks about six crucial facts of positivity based on her research. Frederickson confirms that positivity feels good (1) and changes the way your brain works (2). Furthermore positivity can transform your future (3), and help you to slow negativity down (4). It turns out that positivity helps to change your life no matter where you start using it (5) – it is a non-linear process. Finally, it is possible to enlarge positivity (6) (p.17-20). Through Frederickson’s study we now know that positivity is not something we were just hoping for. It is now studied and explained in such a way that there is no escape. Frederickson talks about the broaden-and-build theory (2009, chapter 4), which, through the Positive Principle shows that while asking positive questions the positive core, of the people or the organization, is amplified.

I have created a mind-map on the Positive Principle from the writings of Kelm (2005), Stavros & Torres (2005), Barrett & Fry (2005, 2010), Cooperrider et al (2008), and Whitney & Trosten-Bloom (2003).

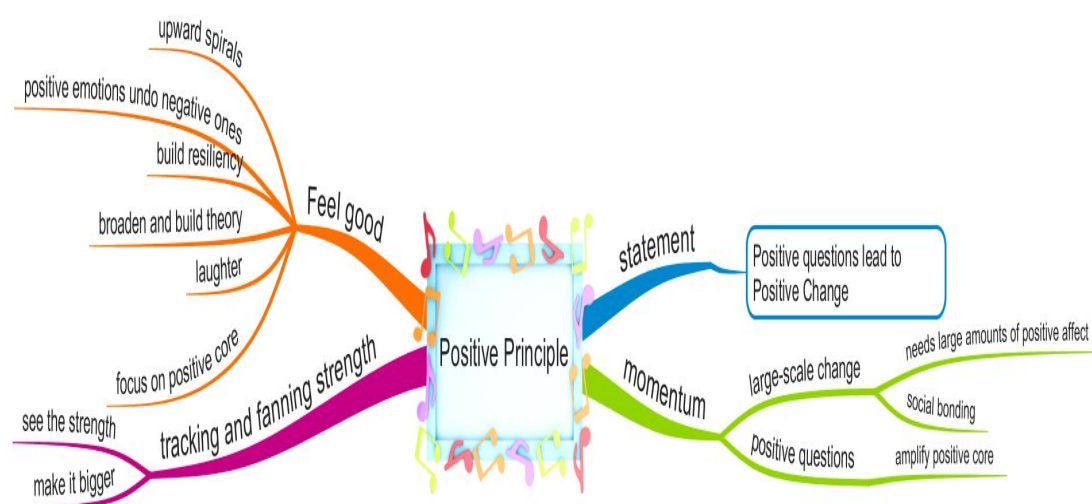


Figure 13: Mind-map on Positive Principle

For the Positive Principle I have chosen the Appreciative Living card with Victor Borge's quote: *"A laugh is the shortest distance between two people."* Kelm put the following questions on the back of the card:

*"As you think about an average day, what three things make you smile?"*

I use the Positive Principle to show what AI can do in a research. One of the NOVI bachelor students Jos Heesen talks about the effects of AI in his team, and I would put these experiences under the Positive Principle. Jos' story is shared in the -Designing the Future- section.

## Appreciative Inquiry's Wholeness Principle

When AI was first introduced, there were only five principles. The other three were added later on, growing from the experience that people started to have with the theory and practice of AI.

The Wholeness Principle talks about bringing out the best in people and organizations. This is done, by bringing all stakeholders together, in large group forums, which stimulated their creativity. In many of the Bachelor studies it was not possible to bring in all stakeholders. So we decided to bring in those who were available. What was possible in their research is to bring all colleagues in to a meeting, which happened in 3-hour sessions. And it was possible to ask AI questions during the interviews that were held. In the 3-hour sessions it was not possible to bring in other stakeholders like customers or even people from outside of the organization due to the fact that none of the managers allowed that to happen.

I have created a mind-map on the Wholeness Principle from the writings of Kelm (2005), Stavros & Torres (2005), and Whitney & Trosten-Bloom (2003).

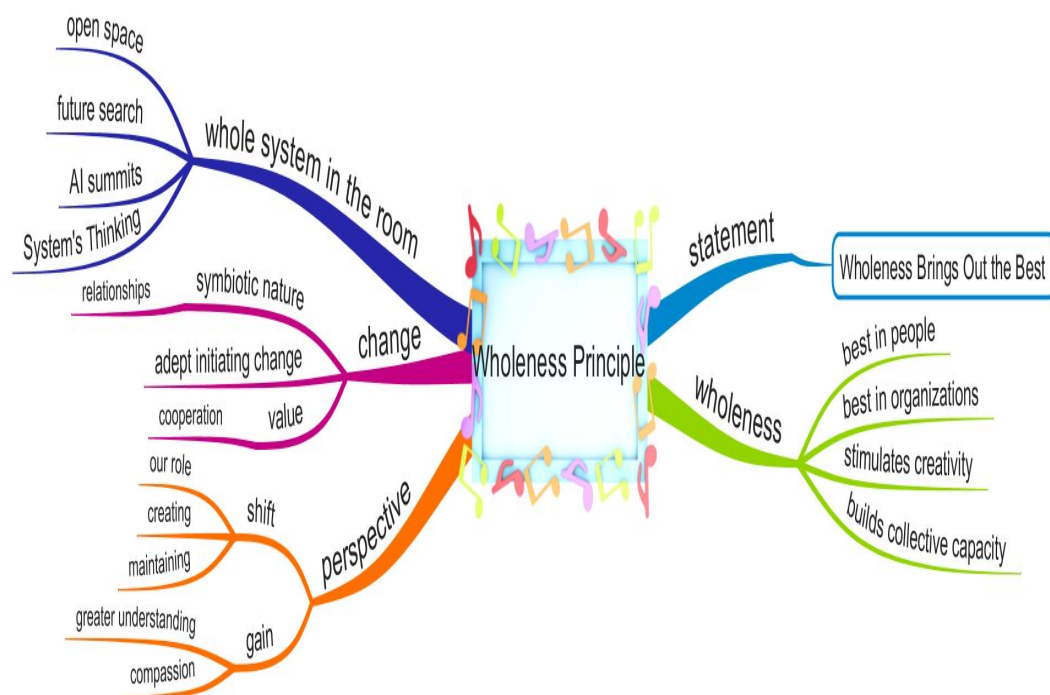


Figure 14: Mind-map on Wholeness Principle



For the Wholeness Principle I have chosen the Appreciative Living card with George Eliot's quote: *"What greater thing is there for two human souls than to feel that they are joined... to strengthen each other... to be one with each other in silent unspeakable memories."* Kelm put the following questions on the back of the card:

*"Think of a relationship you really value. What could you do today to let this person know how special he or she is?"*

I like this question because it brings me back to what is important. It shows me that I'm not doing it alone. When I think about the relationships that I value the people who were the researchers in this dissertation are on the list! Two special people who I want to mention here are Kristin and Mille who have been so generous to read my dissertation before it was finished. They are living the AI approach. The way they have given me feedback has been top Tracking and Fanning. This way of feedback should be called feedforward! It caused me to take that what was good and showed me what I wanted more of.

### Appreciative Inquiry's Enactment Principle

The Enactment Principle says that acting “as if” is self-fulfilling. The way this is shown in AI is for example the usage of provocative proposition. I have noticed in my own research that working with this principle has created energy and creative possibilities. The provocative propositions that I have used for this research are discussed in the –Designing the Future- section. An example of a provocative proposition, is given by Cooperrider et al. (2008, p. 169):

*“Design element: Human Resources Management System*

*Theme/Topic: Performance Appraisal.*

*Our organization acts on its value of high-level trust in the belief that people are committed to personal accountability by using appreciative performance appraisals. It focuses on employee competence and exemplary service to our stakeholders. Our employees are valued.”*

I have created a mind-map on the Enactment Principle from the writings of Kelm (2005), Stavros & Torres (2005), and Whitney & Trosten-Bloom (2003).

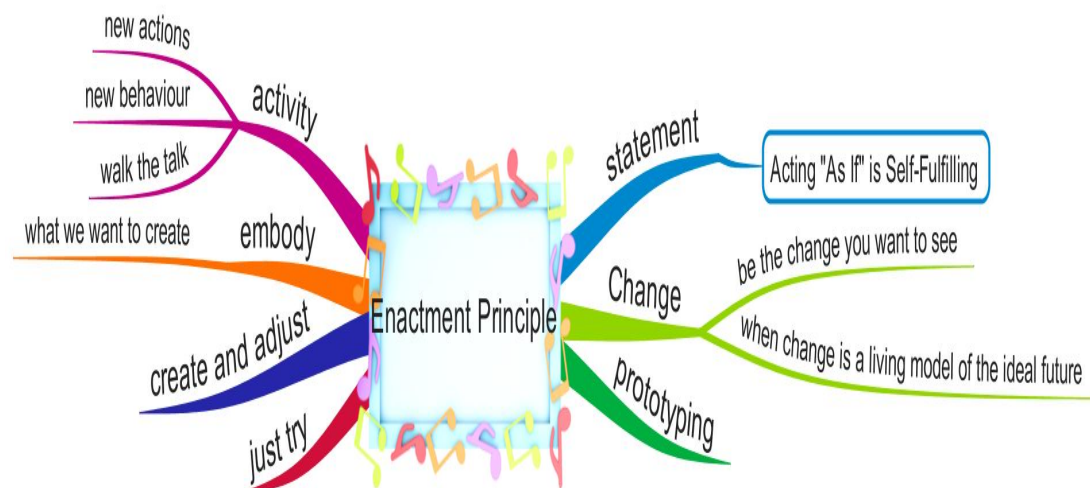


Figure 15: Mind-map on Enactment Principle

What I like about the Enactment Principle is that it shows us that we don't have to do it all perfect the first time. When starting to write on this dissertation I took small steps and made sure I talked to many Ph.D.s who had finished their work. I added stuff, created and adjusted. Bushe (2010) talks about tracking and fanning and explains: *“So tracking is, most profoundly, the ability to see what you want more of as already being there. Sometimes you just have to start with a leap of faith”*. (p. 218)

This leap of faith is where the Enactment Principle steps in. Sometimes the strengths in a person are not that obvious. But you can see a glimpse of it. And that is where you should be fanning. So sometimes it helps, for example when giving feedback, is to think about that what you want more of and ask for more of that.

### Appreciative Inquiry's Free Choice Principle

The Free Choice Principle shows that people perform better and are more committed when they have freedom to choose how and what they contribute. This is an important principle when looking at why using AI will help change processes to be successful. I believe that when people are 'forced' to step in a change process in which they had no say, it will fail.

The Free Choice Principle made it possible to let students choose whether they wanted to use AI because, only then, would organizational excellence and positive change happen.

I have created a mind-map on the Free Choice Principle from the writings of Kelm (2005), Stavros & Torres (2005), and Whitney & Trosten-Bloom (2003).

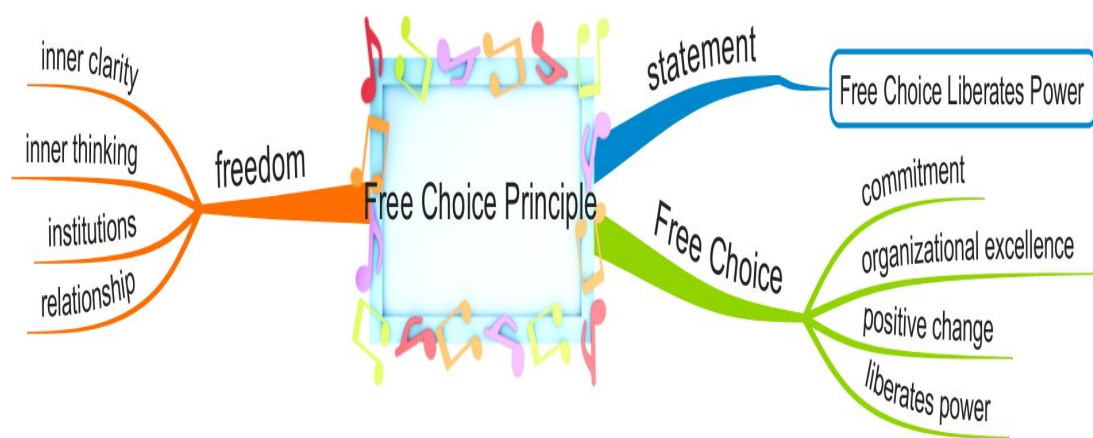


Figure 16: Mind-map on Free Choice Principle

Often students suffer under internal and external forces that make it impossible for them to choose a research project that they really want. But from the practice of *Aikido* I have learned to look for inner clarity. At the moment of inner clarity there is a peace, which feels like knowing. Keeping that feeling inside while looking at the different opportunities a research project can contain helps to make chooses that create future forming research.

### Appreciative Inquiry's Narrative Principle

Barret and Fry (2005) added the Narrative Principle, after they saw how the sharing of stories was getting more and more how AI worked. In the sharing of stories the sharing of experiences is seen as the way to bring people together. It is about bringing power to the people while they create their story on heroes in the organization.

I have created a mind-map on the Narrative Principle from the writings of Kelm (2005), and Barret & Fry (2005).

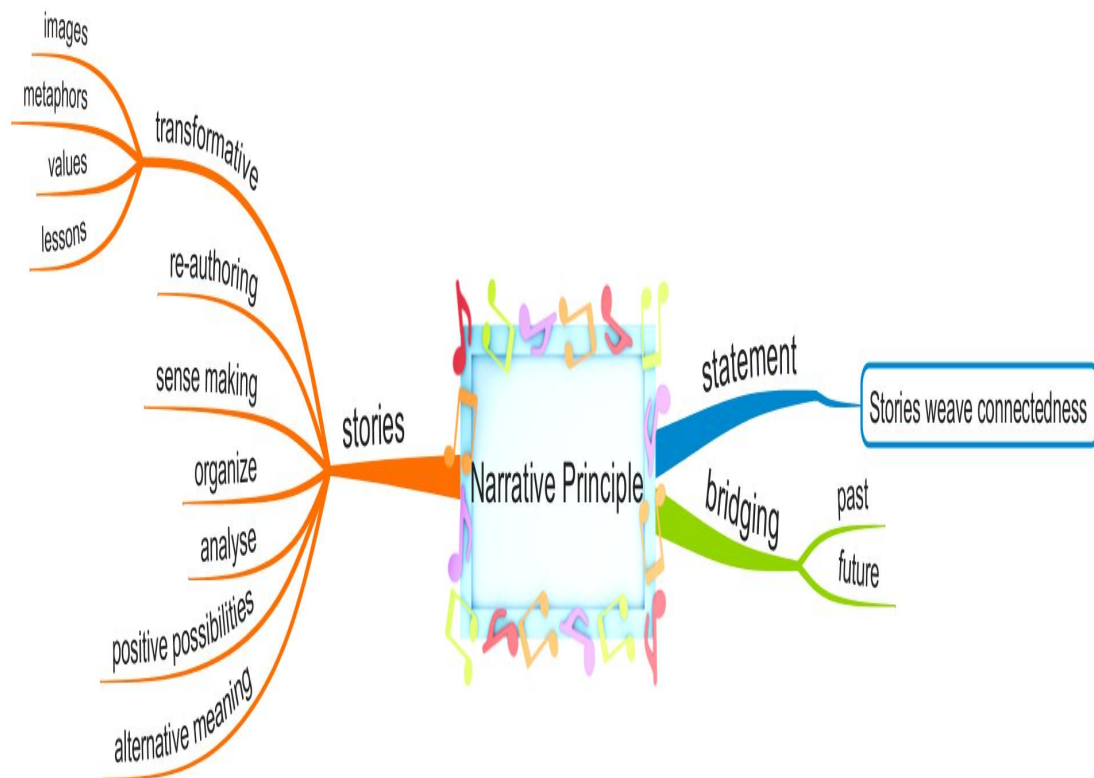


Figure 17: Mind-map on Narrative Principle

For the Narrative Principle I have chosen the Appreciative Living card with Mahatma Gandhi's quote: *"Be the change you wish to see in the world."* Kelm put the following questions on the back of the card:

*"What hopes and dreams do you have for a better world? If you were to pick one word to describe the "change you wish to see," what would it be? How can you "Be the change you wish to see" in your own life right now?"*

These questions invite to tell a story. They are perfect for getting people to talk about their experience. Cooperrider's introduction, which was shared in the 'Defining the Inquiry' section, is an example of such a story. The story invites to look at one's organization and see what stories are shared, what language is used.

## Appreciative Inquiry's Awareness Principle

The most recently added principle is by Stavros and Torres (2005). They feel it is necessary to include this principle when you want to bring AI into your life. In order to be able to work with AI you need to be it, or live it. And Stavros and Torres say, *"You can practice living the AI principles with self-reflective awareness of the significance of not only your actions and the actions of others, but also the many possibilities for how the interactions can play out."* (p. 79)

I have created a mind-map on the Awareness Principle from the writings of Kelm (2005), and Stavros and Torres (2005).

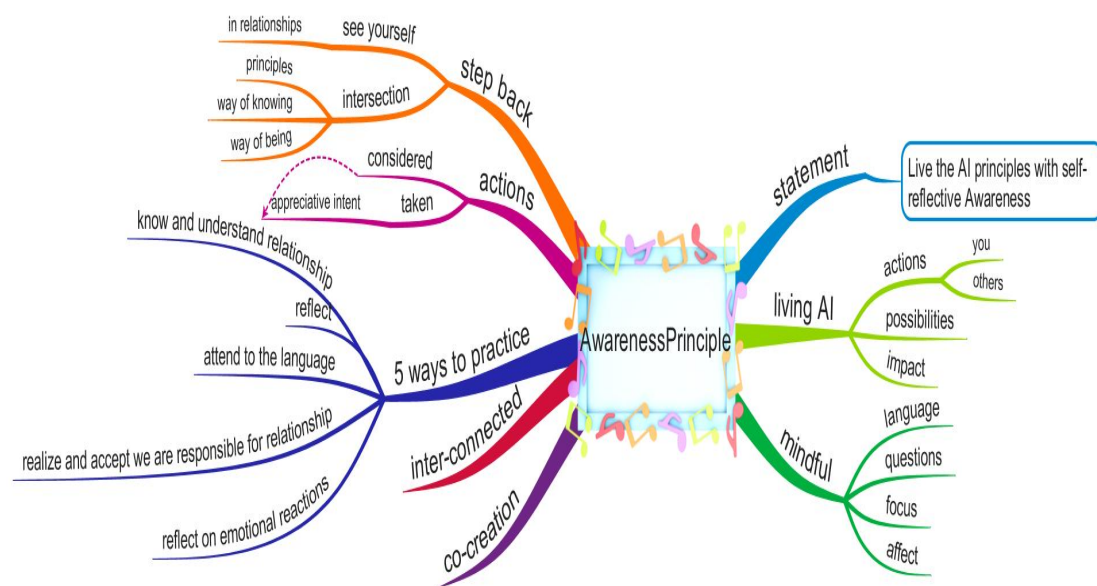


Figure 18: Mind-map on Awareness Principle

The Awareness Principle helps to create opportunities to be mindful of what we say, and how we act in relationships. Especially the Ph.D. researchers seemed to be fully aware of this principle. In the interviews I had with them and in the reading of their dissertations I could see and almost feel the mindful thinking they went through about what words to use. Stavros and Hinrichs (2005) suggest practicing cycles of action and reflection, where we act, reflect, and act with awareness. More on how self reflection can help making research future forming is shared in the first person description of the –Delivering the Future– section.

### Appreciative Inquiry's Shizentai Principle

During this research I became more and more aware of the need for researchers to bridge the world of head and the world of feet, so to speak. Aware of the narrow range of selected variables in research, ambiguities in measurement, conflicts among statistical models and multiple interpretations of findings, but curious enough to create the future through research. And calm so that an appreciative climate can be obtained in the research.

While studying the martial art of *aikido* we use a practice, called *Centering* to stay focused. This practice works through our neural system and is 'easy' to learn, also for people not practicing *aikido*. For the purpose of this research, and the work with the researchers I have called the state in which we can be open minded, aware, curious and calm *Shizentai*.

*Shizentai* is the Japanese word for bodily awareness, which is translated in *ma ai*, timing – *Sen* – is important, and – *ki no nagare* – a fluent movement.

It is important to realize that to be in the state of *Shizentai*, "*is an embodied experience, that can be felt, and that can be used as a way to focus, to learn, and move through transitions*" (Strozzi Heckler, 1984, p.80).

It is also important to express that some people see being in the state of *centeredness and Shizentai* as something stiff and non-flexible. This is not the case. In order to be in the state it is important to practice as much as possible.

Here is an exercise that will help understand what *Shizentai* feels like:

*Stand straight, with your feet at hip-width. Make sure that your back and hips are straight, and don't bow forward with your head.*

*Ask someone to test to see whether you're centered, by pushing you slightly against your shoulders. Feel the difference if you don't stand straight, but look down, or have a not so straight back. You should be easy to move, when you're too focused. When you are in the state of *Shizentai*, you are solid as a rock, flexible, free to see, free to think, with an open mind, aware and calm.* <sup>15</sup>

We don't have to be standing up to feel this posture, with practice it is possible to be in this state always, no matter whether we're standing, sitting or lying down.

This is the bodily, or neural aspect of being in the state of *Shizentai*. The mental part demands that we keep our bodily posture as described, but we bring our mental awareness into a state of curiosity. We don't know what is to happen, but we are curious. We don't know what the researchers, our stakeholders think, or will decide. We try to forget the mental maps that we have, we try to look at various different questions we could ask in order to perhaps find more

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<sup>15</sup> This practice is part of the Aikido training by Sensei Wilko Vriesman, 6<sup>th</sup> Dan Aikido teacher in Amsterdam, The Netherlands.



possibilities than earlier. While practicing this state, we are making research future forming, due to the openness to possibilities.

I can almost hear you say: “how can we do this as researchers?” Well, the easy answer is – to practice the mentioned posture as often as possible. However, what I’ve noticed during the practicing of *aikido* is that even though I’ve been studying *aikido* for more than 20 years, it is only now that I begin to learn more about the importance of posture. I was used to live in the world of my head or feet all the time. I would be reading and looking at information all the time. And even when in conversation with others, I would tell them I was listening, but in fairness I was only thinking about what to say next. In practicing *aikido* I’m learning to bridge the gap between head and feet. I’m learning to *center* and stay in *Shizentai*, through different practices during the *aikido* classes. So answering your question on how you can do this, as researchers I think my answer would be that we all have to find a way, a practice, which helps us to go to that place where our bridge is. In the chapter on *aikido*, I’ll talk some more about this practice and what it is teaching me.

In a mind-map this new Principle looks like this:

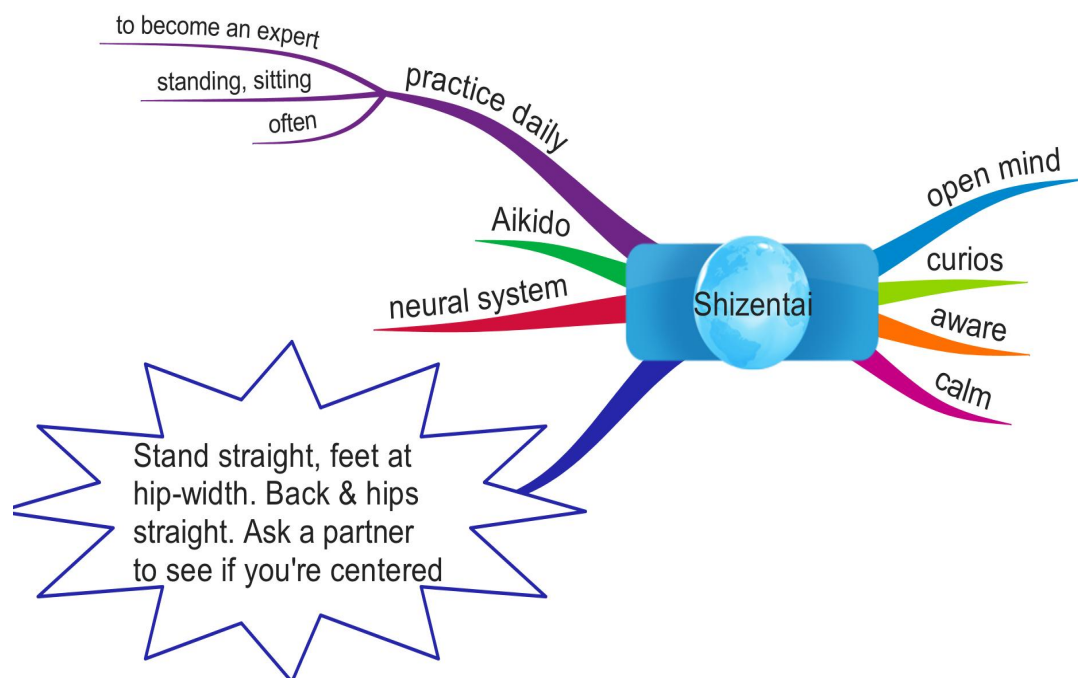


Figure 19: mind-map Shizentai Principle



### **Appreciative Inquiry's Assumptions**

In AI various assumptions are used. Reed says, *"The principles make the links between theoretical development across a range of disciplines, for example, human development, interaction, organizational and learning theories, and the starting points for AI. These five principles are important, but they are also quite abstract, and so the development of AI assumptions, essentially the principles translated into the statements that AI work can begin with, help to clarify the process of doing AI"*. (2007, p.27) I give an overview of the assumptions here:

#### **In every society, organization, or group, something works.**

Sometimes it is hard to discover what works. It is easier for people to make a list with things they don't like, or that doesn't work. But when asked inviting questions, then people are ready to find what works.

#### **What we focus on becomes our reality.**

Making the decision to focus on what works has helped many organizations to push forward in change.

"The practice of AI is distinguished from other approaches to change by the amount of choice it offers people" (Whitney and Trosten-Bloom, 2003, p.77).

"By choosing to focus on what works, researchers create a sense of possibility, rather than a sense of limitation" (Reed, 2007, p.28).

#### **Reality is created in the moment, and there are multiple realities.**

This assumption builds on the poetic principle. In AI we can inquire through a process of story-telling, interviewing, conversations. That in itself will give room for multiple realities, and the awareness of those multiple realities. The constructionist view on the world, with the multiple realities is often seen as a new worldview, especially for those new to research.

In Research and Social Change (McNamee & Hosking, 2013) the shifts in thinking about inquiry are given in a table:

Table 8: Shifts in thinking about inquiry (McNamee & Hosking, 2013, p. 59)

<b>Received view of science</b>	<b>Relational constructionism</b>
Data	On-going process
Results	Process
Control	Minimal structures & unfolding
Method	Forms of practice/performance in context
Reliability	Generativity
Validity	Usefulness to the (multiple) local communities
Protocol	Emergence & Reflexivity
Science & scientist Centered	Ongoing processes Centered

The assumption that reality is created in the moment, and that there are multiple realities, fits perfect in with the generativity, emergence and reflexivity and process.

**The act of asking questions of an organization or group influences the group in some way.**

*“This assumption links with some of the work on change theory and the principle of simultaneity, which suggests that asking questions gets people to think about their activities in new ways and that this thinking can lead to new ways of doing” (Reed, 2007, p. 28).*

(Adams, 2009) Book *Change your questions, change your life* describes two ways of thinking: The Learner and The Judger. It gives the following questions:

Table 9: Judger and learner questions (Adams, 2009, p.50)

<b>Judger Questions</b>	<b>Learner Questions</b>
What's wrong?	What works?
Whose fault is it?	What am I responsible for?
What's wrong with me?	What do I want?
How can I prove I'm right?	What can I learn?
How will this be a problem?	What are the facts? What's useful about this?
Why is that person so stupid and frustrating?	What is the other person thinking, feeling and wanting?
How can I be in control?	What is the big picture?
Why bother?	What's possible?
<b>We all ask both kinds of questions, and we have the power to choose which ones to ask in any moment.</b>	

In the *Encyclopedia of Positive Questions, volume one* (Whitney, Cooperrider, Trosten-Bloom, & Kaplin, 2005) it is states that it is important to get staff meetings off to a good start, and suggests using a round table discussion. One of the positive questions can be asked at the beginning of the meeting, to ensure that a good tone is set. The same rule applies for good research. Each of the meetings, each of the chapters, each of the projects should start with a positive question.

**People have more confidence and comfort to journey to the future (the unknown) when they carry forward parts of the past (the known).**

*“This assumption recognizes that, for many people, doing new things is a process that arouses fear and anxiety. Exploring and building on current acts, rather than proposing a start that will begin from a rejection of all that has gone before, gives people the confidence to go forward” (Reed, 2007, p. 28).*

**If we carry parts of the past forward, they should be the best about the past.**

It is important to realize that change is difficult for many people. One way of making change easier is to allow people to carry parts of the past forward. If we assume that what we focus on, will be our reality, it is easier to see that bringing what is best about the past with us to the future is a good thing to do.

**It is important to value differences.**

Hearing the different voices in a research will help create a reality in which differences are valued. Somehow, curiosity is important in this assumption, curiosity towards the other person.

**The language we use creates our future**

This too is an assumption drawing from ideas from social constructionist thought.

Reed (2007) correctly states that by calling these assumptions, we make a mistake. An assumption would suggest that they are unquestioned and unchallenged by practitioners, which is not the case. In many of the summits that I've been at with for example the European AI network<sup>16</sup> people do challenge the assumptions and talk about them to discover how they work. For the purpose of this study it is merely my wish to describe them along with the principles. Some people think that AI is only about being positive, to show what various authors have said about that, I've included the next chapter.

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.networkplace.eu>

### **Appreciative Inquiry is not (only) about the positive**

For me, as for many of the other researchers working with AI, in the beginning AI was very much about the positive. To be able to stay away from problems and be *“blinded by the positive stuff”* (Bushe, 2007, p1) was easy and felt great. But was it always effective or did it work?

When AI is transformational, it has two sets of qualities: it leads to new ideas, and it leads people to choose new actions (Bushe & Kassam, 2005). *“When successful, AI generates spontaneous, unsupervised, individual, group and organizational action toward a better future”* (Bushe, 2007, p.1).

The core of AI is generativity (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987, as quoted in Bushe, 2007). AI can be generative in a number of ways. *“It is the quest for new ideas, images, theories and models that liberate our collective aspirations, alter the social construction of reality and, in the process, make available decisions and actions, that weren’t available or didn’t occur to us before”* (Bushe, 2007, p.1).

Bushe (2007) answers the question about what can make AI generative by focusing on the fact that the purpose of AI is to generate a new and better future. Bushe talks about the need for generative questions, generative conversations, and generative action.

**Generative questions** should have novelty and surprise in them, so they should be surprising. They should touch people’s heart and spirit. *“Talking about and listening to the stories and answers will build relationships. Furthermore the questions should force us to look at reality a little differently, either because of how they ask us to think, or because of who we are listening to”* (Bushe, 2007, p.4-5).

The question is how can we make AI questions surprising for researchers who have worked with AI?

**Generative Conversations** are conversations that provide new images and ideas and, sometimes, new relationships among the people who participate in an AI summit or AI research. In my experience, after having done the interviews in a Discovery phase, we start talking about how to create the dreamed future, sometimes the energy drops. People seem not to want to let go of the excitement that held them during the sharing of stories. It is important to think about ways of working in the design and destiny phase that allows for the energy to remain high. I will talk about energy levels, which in *aikido* is called Ki, in the *aikido* chapter 2.10.

**Generative Actions** belong in the Destiny/Delivery/Deploy phase. Bushe's (2007) recipe for a generative Delivery phase is: to create collective agreement on what you are trying to accomplish.

- We know where we want to go. To ensure that people believe they are authorized to take actions that will move the organization in the direction of the Design.
- We don't need permission to act and to create commitments by everyone to take some kind of initial action.
- Taking voluntary, visible action. Rather than planning and controlling, leadership needs to look for any and all acts that move the organization in the desired direction and find ways to support and amplify those efforts, *"While leaders track and fan"*. (Bushe, 2007, p.6)

Tracking and Fanning is looking for where what you want more of what already exists and adding oxygen to a small fire to create a blaze. This process is part of Bushe's Clear Leadership program (Bushe, 2009).

In organizational development, management of change and in research, choosing the topic is one of the first, and perhaps the most important, steps. The focus of the inquiry should reflect the positive core of an organization, or a research (Reed, 2007). In order to select a topic, asking questions might help.

Cooperrider et al. (2003, p.32) gives examples of questions that can be asked:

*"What factors give life to this organization when it is and has been most alive, successful, and effective?"*

*"What possibilities, expressed or latent, provide opportunities for more vital, successful, and effective (vision-and-values congruent) forms of organization?"*

These questions can be asked to a team that helps to create a focus for the organization to work with. The questions are based on the constructionist, poetic, simultaneity and anticipatory principle. These questions can help the researcher to discover what is important, in this research, for all stakeholders. Cooperrider et al. (2003) suggest that it is best to restrict the list to three to five compelling topics, in order to keep focus. Topics should be affirmative or stated in the positive, so to be in line with the constructionist, poetic and positive principle. They should be desirable, and identifying the objectives that people want, this is also in line with the constructionist and positive principle. They should be topics that the group is genuinely curious and wants to learn more about, and they should move in the direction that the group wants to go in. This is based on the constructionist, free choice and awareness principle.

Even when a researcher chooses to work on their own, or when it is impossible to create this part in the research with a group of stakeholders, it is important to try to find a topic that ticks all the above-mentioned boxes, for all stakeholders

involved. If research is investigating a topic it should be acknowledged that *“human systems grow in the direction of their deepest and most frequent inquiries”*. (Cooperrider et al., 2003, p.37)

This is based on the poetic principle that says we have habits of seeing and whatever we focus on will grow.

As with finding the best questions to ask, choosing a topic and choosing affirmative language, thinking is affected – or, as Cooperrider et al. said, *“Words create Worlds”* (Ibid. p.38). This is based on the constructionist principle. Next element in this literature review is on SOAR.

# Strengths Opportunities Aspirations Results (SOAR)

Stavros and Hinrichs (2009) created a strategic planning framework, which they call the strength base answer to the often-used SWOT analyses.

The SOAR approach is used in the -Defining the Inquiry- section to bring out the strengths, opportunities, aspirations and results that helped create this dissertation.

Cockell & McArthur-Blair say, “*for strategic planning in higher education, SOAR questions can be used with stakeholders to collect data*” (2012, p. 128).

The ‘standard’ SOAR questions are described below:

## **Strengths:**

What can we build on?

- What are we most proud of as an organization? How does that reflect our greatest strength?
- What makes us unique? What can we be best at in our world?
- What is our proudest achievement in the last year or two?
- How do we use our strengths to get results?
- How do our strengths fit with the realities of the marketplace?
- What do we do or provide that is world class for our customers, our industry, and other potential stakeholders?

## **Opportunities:**

What are our stakeholders asking for?

- How do we make sense of opportunities provided by the external forces and trends?
- What are the top three opportunities on which we should focus our efforts?
- How can we best meet the needs of our stakeholders, including customers, employees, shareholders, and community?
- Who are possible new customers?
- How can we distinctively differentiate ourselves from existing or potential competitors?
- What are possible new markets, products, services or processes?
- How can we reframe challenges to be seen as exciting opportunities?
- What new skills do we need to move forward?

## **Aspirations:**

What do we care deeply about?

- When we explore our values and aspirations, what are we deeply passionate about
- Reflecting on our Strengths and Opportunities conversations, who are we, who should we become, and where should we go in the future?
- What is our most compelling aspiration?
- What strategic initiatives (i.e. projects, programs, and processes) would support our aspirations?

## **Results:**

How do we know we are succeeding?

- Considering our Strengths, Opportunities, and Aspirations, what meaningful measures would indicate that we are on track to achieving our goals?
- What are 3 to 5 indicators that would create a scorecard that addresses a triple bottom line of profit, people, and planet?

- What resources are needed to implement vital projects?
- What are the best rewards to support those who achieve our goals? (Stavros & Hinrichs, 2009, p.16-17)

Stavros and Hinrichs (2009, p. 29) created the 5-I approach to using SOAR, which is shown in the figure below:

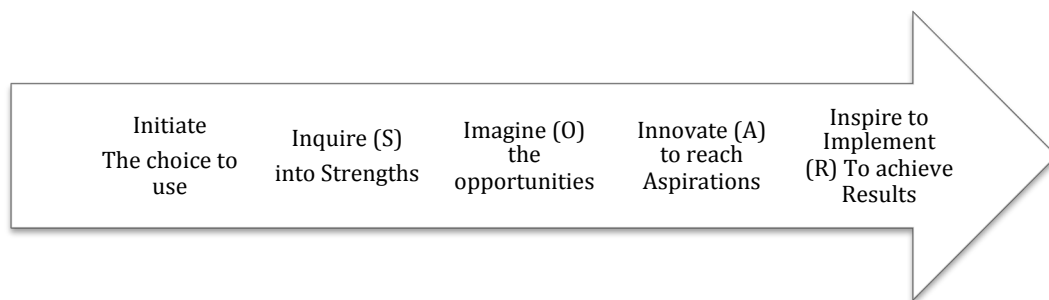


Figure 20: The 5-I approach to using SOAR (Stavros & Hinrichs, 2009, p. 29)

The first phase –Initiate- is where leadership decides whether or not to use the SOAR framework. In the second phase –Inquire- participants are engaged in conversations in small groups or one-to-one interviews using questions created by the core team. In the third phase –Imagine- small groups meet to engage in possibility thinking. The goal is to imagine what might happen if they apply the information from the Inquire phase to envision a desired future. The forth phase – Innovate- is where creative ideas transform into action items. And the last phase – Inspire to Implement- is where plans lead to action to lead to success. (Stavros & Hinrichs, 2009). In the next chapter AI as an evaluation tool is described.



## Appreciative Inquiry in evaluation

Lewin (1946) who is credited by many with coining the term action research promoted the idea that at the heart of the research process *“there is a cycle of having an idea, exploring the idea, planning an action, taking action, evaluating the action, amending the plan and so on.”* (Chard, 2011 as quoted by Chard in Simon & Chard, 2014, p. 46)

In AI we don't talk about evaluating the action, but we use the word valuation or validation. Through the use of AI interviews, it is possible to discover what works in an organization or in a project that was done through, for example, the BedrijfsAikido group. *“AI has also been used to help organizations improve more effectively through “discovery and valuing, envisioning, dialogue and co-constructing the future”* (Ashford & Patkar, 2001, p.4 as quoted in Preskill & Catsambas, 2006, p.7).

Five years ago the BedrijfsAikido group was created by a group of people who were Aikido teachers and wanted to introduce this martial art and its benefits to business. If an evaluation can be done at the BedrijfsAikido clients, using AI interview questions, then that would be the first step in the integration of AI into the Aikido scene. It can help to show how AI, used as a valuation approach can add value to the group and its clients.

Several organizations have worked with BedrijfsAikido in the past five years, mostly big organizations like NUON, PGGM and Achmea. It is interesting for both groups (BedrijfsAikido and clients) to discover what working together has brought them. Preskill and Tzavaras Catsambas found that the application of AI practices is particularly successful when

- The organization is interested in using participatory and collaborative approaches to evaluation
- An organization's members are open and committed to individual, group, and organizational learning from inquiry
- There is a desire to build evaluation capacity – to help others learn from and about evaluation practice
- The evaluation includes many different stakeholders
- The evaluation must be particularly efficient with regard to time and costs
- The organization values innovation
- The organization is engaged in organizational change and wants to use the evaluation as a means for assessing and preparing members' readiness for change (Preskill & Tzavaras Catsambas, 2006, p. 46-47).

The combination of using AI in the valuation of the past five years working with clients in processes that included Aikido is a combination that makes the research future forming. In all the processes the clients were trained to be in *Shizentai*, like the practice described earlier. AI can be used to create a valuation

plan. AI can also be used to design and conduct interviews and surveys. For the BedrijfsAikido group AI can also be used to design a valuation system that the group can use in all of the new projects. In the next chapter personal development tools that derived from AI are shared.

## The tiniest AI summit in the world – Personal Development

In each of the areas that I work (research, consulting and coaching) I use Appreciative Inquiry. Cooperrider (2012) wrote about his own Appreciative Inquiry into himself in the May 2012 AI Practitioner. He calls this process 'the tiniest AI summit in the world'. Even though he is walking through the 'normal' D-cycle, with the Define, Discovery, Dream, Design and Delivery phase, he has build on them further in the article. I have made a mind-map for the seven steps he is introducing:

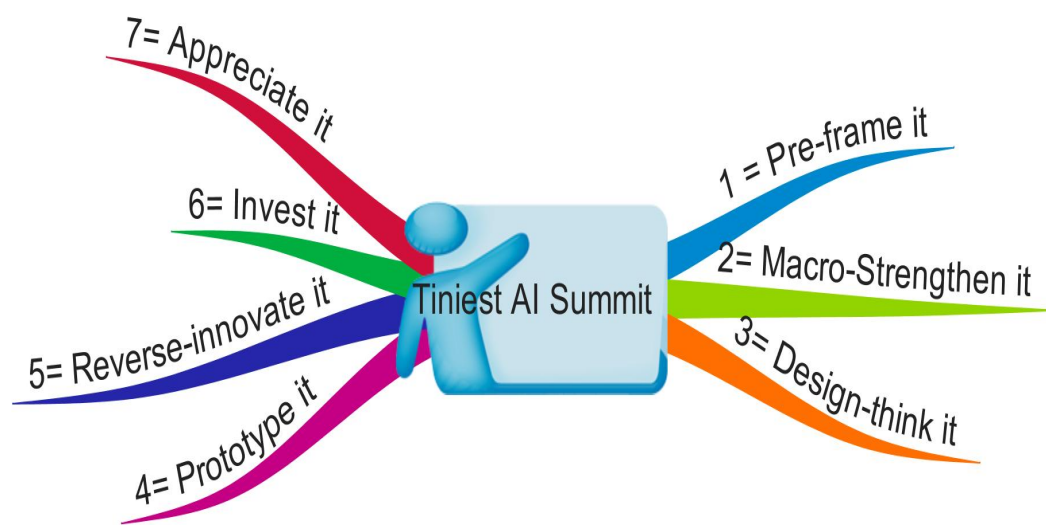


Figure 21: Mind-map for the Tiniest AI Summit (Cooperrider, 2012)

The article describes a new model of positive change that Cooperrider is developing with his colleague Lindsey Godwin.

I will come back to this version of an AI summit when describing the need for a self-reflection process for the students at NOVI as part of their research, in the - Delivering the future- phase of this dissertation.

Kelm (2005, 2008) has also written about the principles of AI in personal life. In her books she works with a three-step process, which includes -Appreciating the Present-, -Imagining the Ideal- and -Acting in Alignment-. In a picture this looks like:

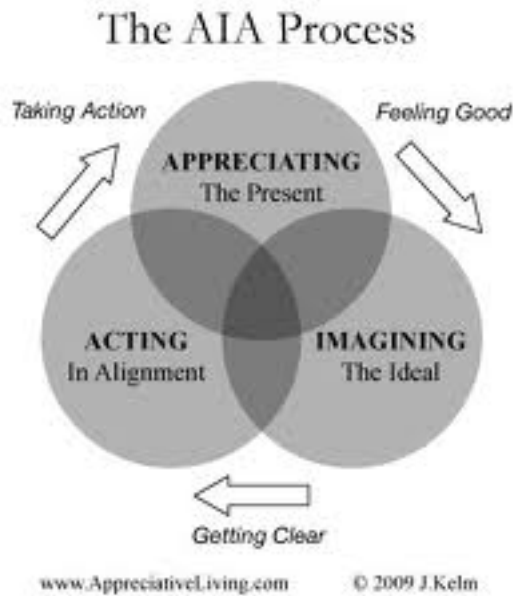


Figure 22: Appreciative Living model by Kelm, (2009)

Cockell and McArthur-Blair (2012) have created a model that is called ALIVE. The following figure is showing the steps that one goes through (p. 82)

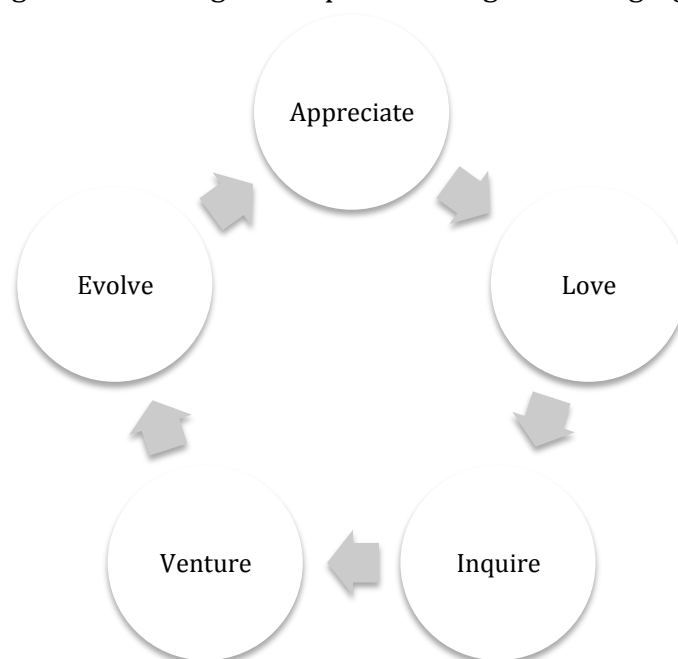


Figure 23: ALIVE Model (Cockell & McArthur-Blair, 2012)

Another model that is partly meant for personal development is the IMAGE model created by Mille Themsen Duvander and Stine Lindegaard Hansen in 2009:

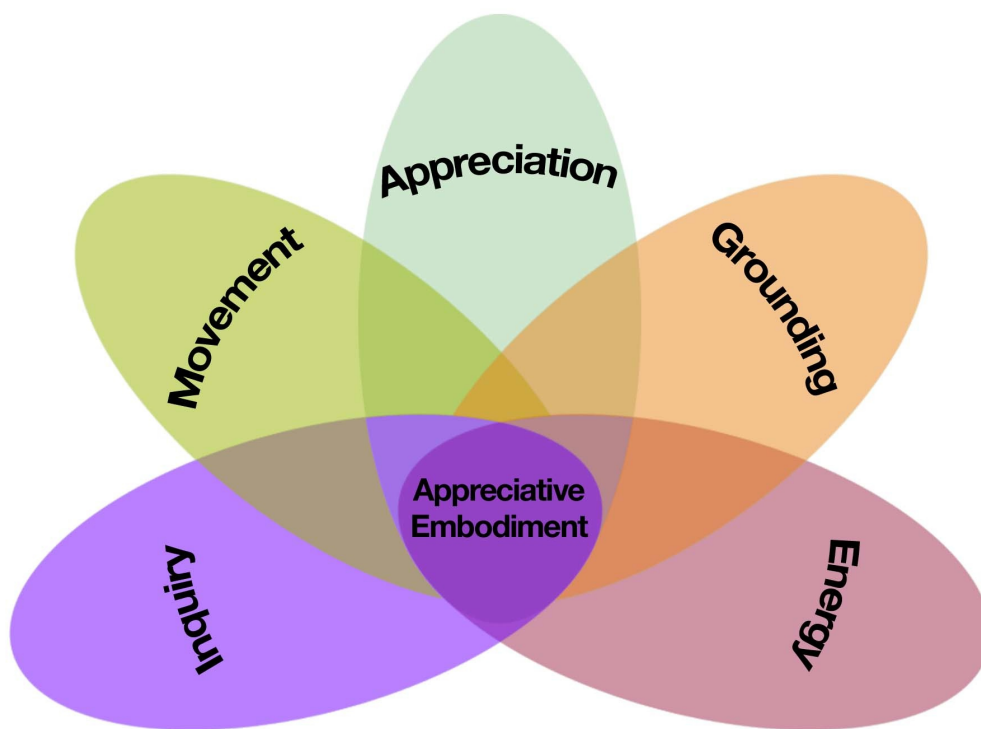


Figure 24: IMAGE model by Mille Themsen Duvander and Stine Lindegaard Hansen (2009)

The IMAGE Model, is explained by Mille as  
**Appreciative Embodiment**

**Inquiry:** to inquire into potential and resources in the body as an organization

**Movement:** through movement the body and the organization comes to live

**Appreciation:** to appreciate what is and to develop good stories

**Grounding:** though grounding and stabilizing engagement and concentration/focus

**Energy:** to create harmony in energy during change processes

Another author who influenced me in the field of personal development, is Bushe (2010). I read Bushe's book in 2012 on Clear Leadership. Subsequently I contacted him and discovered that he was planning to come to the Netherlands for a training workshop and a train-the-trainer workshop. I enrolled on the

course and in the first four days of training, Bushe took us (a group of 6) through his findings. I decided to enlist in the Train the Trainer course, which would take place some weeks later, in the Netherlands, in order to gain accreditation, and be able to train others in the matter. I wanted to learn about the scientific research behind the models created by Bushe. To my regret that research was not discussed, but I did enjoy the training and am using the findings often in my own communication with students and clients.

The Clear Leadership model addresses two problems of collaborative organizing:

1. We each create our own experience, although we think others create it, and
2. We are sense-making beings and make up stories about others so that we can fill in the gaps of what we know about their experience. (Bushe, 2010, preface)

I would like to explain why a leadership model has influenced me in my work. Bushe confirms, *"Everyone is having a unique experience. (Bushe, 2010, p.6) He says; percept generation is a constant, ceaseless process". (Ibid, p.7) This process of creating percepts is what we call our 'experience'. The perceptions you are generating are part of your experience, and so are the reactions you are having to those perceptions. These are the thoughts, ideas, judgments, feelings, bodily sensations, wants and desires you are having". (Ibid. p.7)*

In the Clear Leadership model we learn to talk about our experience, be curious to the others' experiences and help them talk about theirs. The model helps to have learning conversations (Ibid, 2010). The skills of clear leadership are: Self-awareness, Descriptiveness, Curiosity and Appreciation (Ibid, 2010).

I discovered that by using the tools Bushe provides, it is possible to change mental models. (Senge, 1997) Talks about changing mental models as being the most important part of change.

Through the model, but even more, as a person Bushe has shown me the 'true' meaning of *'Words create Worlds'*. I am much more aware of what happens in my mind, in the sense-making process that is there, while being in conversation. In the Clear Leadership model this is important to get rid of 'interpersonal mush'. The 'interpersonal mush' is what happens in a relationship when one is unable to be descriptive (talk about what you observe, feel, think, want), and is not inviting the other to be descriptive due to not being self-aware and not being curious. The AI principles which are used during this process are Constructionist, Poetic, Simultaneity, Anticipatory, Positive, Wholeness, Enactment, Narrative and Awareness principle. In the next chapter Anderson's state of not-knowing is shared (Anderson & Goolishian, The Client is the Expert; a not-knowing approach to therapy, 1992).

## Anderson's Not-knowing

*"Human systems are language generating and, simultaneously, meaning-generating systems". (Anderson, 1992 p.27)* Meaning and understanding are socially constructed. During this research I discovered that most of the time I've been in what Anderson calls a position or state of 'not-knowing'. To be in this position of 'not-knowing' required that my understandings, explanations, and interpretations in the research were not limited by prior experiences or theoretically formed truths, and knowledge. This description of the not-knowing position is influenced by hermeneutic and interpretive theories and the related concepts of social constructionism, language, and narrative (Gergen, 1982, Shapiro & Sica, 1984; Shotter & Gergen, 1989; Wachterhauser, 1986; quoted by Anderson, 1992).

Anderson says, *"Not-Knowing refers to how a practitioner thinks about the construction of knowledge and the intent and manner with which it is introduced into the practice. It is a humble attitude about what the practitioner thinks they might know and a belief that the practitioner does not have access to privileged information, can never fully understand another person, and always needs to learn more about what has been said or not said."* (Anderson, no date)

*"Not-knowing is a concept that refers to a therapist's orientation to knowledge, primarily to three things: (1) the way a therapist conceptualizes the creation of knowledge, (2) the intent with which a therapist uses their knowledge, and (3) the manner, attitude, and timing with which they introduce it."* (Anderson, 2012, p.18)

Traditionally questions, either in research, or organization development processes, are influenced by the researcher or consultant's knowledge. In the case of this research, the researchers had knowledge of AI. The questions used in the interviews were drawn from the often-used AI questions on best experience, values, core life-giving factor and the three wishes. However from the beginning, it was from a position of not-knowing that I went into the interviews. At the end, when I was analyzing the interviews, I returned again to the state of not-knowing. Kristiansen and Bloch-Poulsen says, *"We learned that action research is an on-going process of transformative co-learning. As shown, this is sometimes a subtle, sometimes a rough and frightening change process balancing between courage, mutual trust, productive not-knowing, and timing."* (Kristiansen & Bloch-Poulsen, 2008, p. 471)

The not-knowing that Anderson discusses is not about knowledge and is not about claiming of knowledge. Gergen and Gergen (2002) suggest, *"Alternative ethnographers break away from the conventions of social science inscription to experiment with polyvocality, poetry, pastiche, performance, and more. These experiments open new territories of expression; they also offer new spaces of relationship."* (Gergen & Gergen, 2002, p.14)

With this comment made by Gergen and Gergen we see there is room for an improvisational response to not-knowing (Anderson & Goolishian, 1992; Anderson, 1997). *“Each act of inquiry invites, mindfully or otherwise, the possibility of an implicative force which changes lives.”* (Simon in Simon & Chard, 2014, p. 23)

It helps me to practice *Shizentai*, which was shared before, to remain in the state of not-knowing that Anderson talks about. The next chapter is about the martial art of Aikido.



# Aikido

In 1990 I first encountered the Japanese martial art of *aikido*. To me this art has been the bridge between the world in which my head lives and the world where my feet walk. Since *aikido* works with the concept of *hara* I call this the world of the belly. According to the *samurai* the belly is where *hara* is located.

*Aikido* is one of the 'new' Japanese martial arts. Morihei Ueshiba (1883-1969) created *aikido* during his life. In *aikido* the teacher is called Sensei. Ueshiba was given the name O'Sensei, which translates as: Honorable Teacher or Great Teacher. The word Aikido is formed from three kanji's (characters): Ai – which means Harmony, Ki – which means Energy, and Do – which means The Way. *Aikido* is translated as: 'The way of harmonizing the universal energy'. At the end of his live Ueshiba called *aikido* The Way of Peace, saying that his martial art was in service of peace and not war.

One could say that besides being an efficient art of fighting, or practice to learn how to defend oneself, it also helps the student of *aikido* to keep integrity and identity, under pressure. As a way of developing the Self, *aikido* provides growth and vitality, with as purpose to move heart and soul to harmony and oneness (Vriesman, 2015).

In the years after the Second World War O'Sensei started giving public demonstrations of his art, which helped *aikido* to be known to the Japanese public. At 12 January 1968 the Hombu Dojo in Tokyo was officially opened. This Dojo is still headquartering to the worldwide *aikido* institute. During the final years of Ueshiba's live, and still today many of his students were asked to travel around the world to introduce *aikido*. After O'Sensei died his son Kisshomaru Ueshiba took over the position of First Teacher, but he did not take over the title of O'Sensei. He is called Doshu (Head of Aikido). Kisshomaru Ueshiba became the technical director of the Aikikai Hombu Dojo in 1948. In 1967 he was named the President of the Aikikai (*Aikido* organization world wide) and took over the leading role of his father, who died in 1969. Kisshomaru Ueshiba became promoter of the modern *aikido* till he died at January 4, 1999. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Doshu is Moriteru Ueshiba, the grandson of O'Sensei, and son of Kisshomaru. After the death of his father he took over the Doshu title and the position of leader of the *aikido* organization worldwide. He offers a lot of training sessions all over the world and helps to spread *aikido* even more. In 2009 the Doshu was in the Netherlands and confirmed the creation of the Dutch Aikido Organization called Aikido Nederland.

One of the students sent to Europe was called Tohei. He introduced *aikido* to the Western world with focus on the ki-part of *aikido*.

Tohei explains how originally *aikido* meant: the way to get into harmony with the Ki of the universe. Nowadays many of the *aikido-ka*'s<sup>17</sup> think that Aikido is about controlling the opponent's Ki. But strictly there is no *aikido* without Ki (Tohei, 1992, p. 19). So what is Ki? Tohei explains that there are two forms of Ki. The first one is the Ki of the universe, which is the energy that makes the sun, the stars, the earth, the plants, the animals, and both human mind and body (*Ibid.* p.20). The second form of Ki is the energy that we use in *aikido* training to connect with our own Ki and that of the universe. In *aikido* we try to learn how to keep Ki flowing, in order to be healthy and strong and capable to perform the techniques.

Tohei talks about positive and negative Ki (*Ibid.* p.22-23) and explains how keeping a positive mind can help to build a strong flow of Ki. With this second Ki principle he uses the Constructionist, Poetic, Simultaneity and Positive Principle of AI.

There are four base principles to help unite body and mind, in *aikido* (*Ibid.* p. 29):

1. Keep One Point
2. Relax fully
3. Keep weight at its lowest point
4. Extend Ki

In *aikido* we study how the mind moves the body. When, during the training, we experience that first we need to focus on our mind to unite body and mind, we learn to go with our attention to a place called One Point. One Point is located in our belly, three fingers (spread) below the navel. Tohei calls this One Point or *Seika-no-itten* (*Ibid.* p. 40). To work with the four principles we practice to *Center*, or to be *Centered*.

The main sources of formation and inspiration for Ueshiba in creating *aikido*, as shown in Westbrook and Ratti (1970, p.30):

The practice has two classes of factors:

1. The inner or interior factors developed through specialized disciplines adopted from the cultural milieu, such as meditation, abdominal breathing, etc.
2. The outer or functional factors (dynamic and technical) based on the martial arts, mainly:
  - a. Armed – archery (kyudo), spear fighting (naginata, yarijutsu), fencing (kendo, iaijutsu, etc.), swimming (tachi oyogi), horsemanship (jobajutsu), stick fighting (tambo; bojutsu) and others.

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<sup>17</sup> Aikido-ka is the student of Aikido, the one practicing Aikido.

- b. Unarmed – from ancient methods of combat such as sumo, kumiuchi, kogusoku, bujutsu, jujutsu, aikijutsu, etc., through a series of specialized schools of instruction.

The motivations are of two orders:

1. Remote or ethical – based on the ethics of Eastern culture and derived, in particular, from its religious and philosophical streams. Examples: Shintoism, Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism.
2. Immediate or practical – based on the necessity for self-defensive action against an unjustified aggression, but in accordance with certain ethical considerations.

To explain the inner factors of *aikido* it is necessary to explain Shinto to some extent. Shinto is seen as the practice in Japan to learn to live in balance with nature. Shinto has no founder and has no doctrines. It has no percepts or commandments, and no idols. Shinto also has no organization. “*Shinto recognizes and celebrates human diversity, just as it recognizes and celebrates the diversity of nature*” (Motohisa Yamakage, 2009, p. 202).

One of the original teachings in Shinto is called the *kototama*, which translates as *the souls of words* (Gleason, 2009). The teachings of *kototama* are thousands of years old. According to Gleason “*O’Sensei created aikido as a means of realizing the kototama*” (Gleason, 2009, p.17).

Ueshiba was interested in the mystical side of the martial arts and studied Shinto with Zen monks. It is interesting to see that in an ancient way of looking at the world, mankind was already aware of the importance of words. Susan Harrow (2014) describes in her blog that doing the *kototama* every morning helps to create change. In her blog she explains that *kototama* is a toning of sacred words and phrases that refer to the Japanese belief that mystical powers dwell in words and names and that speaking them can influence and affect our circumstances, environment, mind, body and soul.

Gleason (2009) has written about the sacred sounds of *kototama*. The teachings of *kototama* are out of scope for this dissertation. To explain why, I’m adding the words of *kototama* scholar Koji Ogasawara:

*“Buddha teaches that the mani jewel (kototama) is compulsory study for a Bodhisattva to become a Buddha. This lays two steps deeper than the basic enlightenment of religion. To understand pure kototama you must get rid of the old karmic crust and skin and become like an innocent baby. This is called resurrection in Christianity, and enlightenment in Buddhism. Therefore you must graduate from the mind of ancient religion by being obedient pupils of the ancient sages.... To graduate from these religions does not mean to ignore them or disregard them, but to understand them*

*with body and soul.*" (Koji Ogasawara, unpublished letters as quote in Gleason, 2009, p.18)

Gleason explains, "*it is said that no one other than a Buddha, or completely realized one, should attempt to explain them*" (kototama) (Gleason, 2009, p. 240).

Not all *aikido* -ka's<sup>18</sup> perform the kototama, but those who are aware of the deeper knowledge that form the base of this martial art are as intrigued as Ueshiba was (Gleason, 2009).

I have included the information about Shinto and kototama in my research to show that there is a link between social constructionism, AI and Aikido. We see the similarity between kototama and the constructionist principle (Words Create Worlds).

The study of *aikido* is based on 3 elements (Vriesman, 2015):

- A solid base in the form of correct techniques, footwork and posture which is developed through practice and living according to the guidelines;
- An internal orientation, with focus on energy maintenance and internal space;
- An external orientation focused on setting free and transforming aggression and the art of the honorable fighting arts.

Vriesman (2015) says that at his dojo *aikido* is experienced for the Western perspective by feeding the mind with 'software' through clear concepts and clear teachings. And for the Eastern perspective there is the feeding of the belly, *hara*, through experiencing emptiness and base.

As a martial art, *aikido* tries to unite body and mind, in such a way that there is harmony within the natural order of live (Vriesman, 2015). This is done through experiencing oneness in ones own body, in the belly where *Ki* resides. The goal of *aikido* is to move in silence (Vriesman, 2015) to feel extraordinarily calm and quiet, while learn to move and act. This is where body and mind are one, and where it is possible to fight without fighting (Vriesman, 2015). It is then where softness is found in the heart, and that is why Ueshiba called his art the Art of Love. Strangely in *aikido* this form of loving acting, is developed through learning to control aggression and frustration, so that while there is action (sharp) there is also love. That is the essence of *aikido* as Budo, the way of the warrior.

In my study of *aikido*, I have learnt that to be centered and keep good posture is important. This learning to move from the center and keep good posture, in Japan is called *Shizentai*. It is a state of mind and body, which I learnt through

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<sup>18</sup> Person studying the martial art of Aikido

performing *aikido* techniques, but which can be learnt through many other practices, like sports, dance and other martial arts. The practice influences the neural system. I think that this part of *aikido* is one of the elements that one can learn without having to be on the mat.

In research often the researcher 'knows' what the outcome of the study will be. Sometimes it is very visible in the questions that are asked at the start of the research. With the Bachelor students at NOVI we talk about this at length in the Research classes. From AI we know that with the first question we ask, we influence the study. So it is important to think about what question to ask, without influencing the study into a direction that we think is the best one. Each research has the 'right' to be looked at creatively.

In *aikido*, when attacked by our opponent, in Aikido we call that person *uke*<sup>19</sup>, we try to Center in such a way that we keep a broad view. This will allow us to look at the attack, the opponent, but still see what happens around us in the world. To Center is the word we use in *aikido*, to keep the proper posture is called *Shizentai*. It is helpful in research to be in the state of not-knowing, keeping an open mind, look at other options, be curious to the other options, be curious to the story that is behind the first glimpse.

If we take the time to be in a state of *Shizentai*, we don't look at the research with a given outcome. We look at the research with an open mind.

When concentrating on only one small part of the research, or in Aikido concentrating on only the attack, Saito says will "*cause the eyes to strain, the back of the neck and the shoulders to become tense, and the muscles in the legs to tighten. This loss of elasticity blocks perception and makes immediate spontaneous reactions impossible*" (Saito, 1993, p. 173).

This is part of the Constructionist (we see things as we are, reality and identity are co-created), the Poetic (we have habits of seeing), the Simultaneity (develop your sense of wonder), the Anticipatory (what we believe, we conceive), the Wholeness (learn to be present to the emerging whole), the Enactment (just try something), and the Awareness (practice awareness in act, reflect, act) principle. So in research this means that you need to focus on the bigger part of the research, have an open mind, *Shizentai*. This focus will help you to discover other possibilities and perhaps you may even discover possibilities that you had not thought about before. When using AI in research the listening to the other voices in the process will allow for innovative and generative opportunities.

Various authors have written about *aikido* and how it is used in both personal and organization development (Pino, 1996, 1999, 2001; Aalten, 2000; Palmer,

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<sup>19</sup> Uke means 'the one that is attacking'. The one that is performing the technique is called Tori.

1991, 2002, 2013; Crum, 1987, 2006; Strozzi Heckler, R. 1984; Shaner, 2010). According to Soatome *“people from many different styles of bujutsu and Budo came to O’Sensei, seeking his teachings. To them he ordered: ‘You must have shoshin, a beginner’s mind, a mind of pure white paper on which to see the moving images of Aikido’s secrets. You must try emptiness. A mind that is filled with opinion and prejudice has no room for the truths of the universe. If a cup is always full, the water becomes stale and spoils. If your ears are always filled with the sound of your own voice, you can not hear the rich harmonies of God”* (Saotome, 1993, p. 133-134).

In the book *The Art of Peace* that was written by Morihei Ueshiba, and translated and edited by John Stevens (Ueshiba, 2002) Ueshiba described the difference between material and spiritual martial art: *“Material martial arts fixate on physical objects. That kind of martial art is a source of endless contention because it is based on the opposition of two forces. A spiritual martial art views things on a higher level. Its base is love, and it looks at things in their totality. It is formless, and never seeks to make enemies”*. (Ueshiba, 2002, p. 31)

*Aikido* is *“One-Spirit, Four-Souls, Three-Fundamentals, and Eight-Powers”* (Ueshiba, 2002, p32).

This is what Ueshiba said about *aikido*. I want to pay attention to the Three-Fundamentals, shown as:

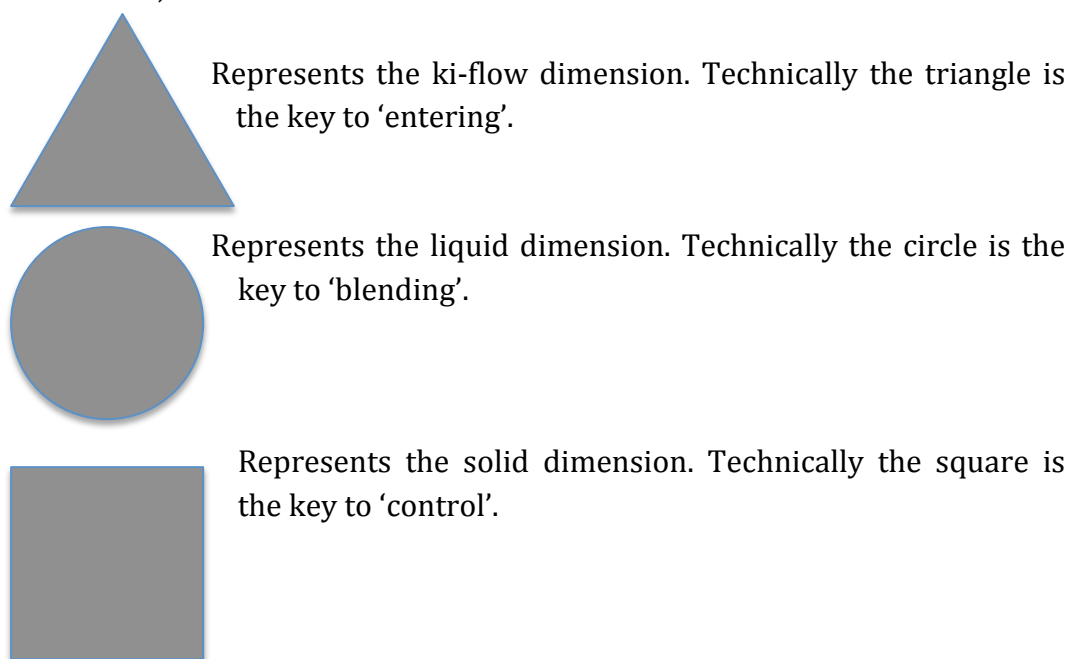


Figure 25: The Three Fundamentals (Stevens, 1993)

Ueshiba (2002) explained, *“the body should be triangular, the mind circular. The triangle represents the generation of energy and is the most stable physical*

*posture. The circle symbolizes serenity and perfection, the source of unlimited techniques. The square stands for solidity, the basis of applied control” (p.113).*

### **My personal path in Aikido**

I started studying Aikido at the age of 28, while living in the city of Haarlem, in the Netherlands. My first teacher was Jan Rusman. Jan used to practice Judo but had discovered Aikido through a demonstration. At the dojo (the Aikido practice room) I was often the only woman, training with men. After five years I left to train with another teacher, who started his own dojo in Hoofddorp. When moving to another area of the country I tried to find a dojo closer to home, discovering Aikido Yuishinkai, which is a practice in which more attention is paid to the Ki-aspect of Aikido. I trained there for two years and then started looking for a dojo closer to home, which was practicing a style closer to my first style, when I encountered Sensei Satomi Ishikawa, 4<sup>th</sup> Dan Aikikai, who is teaching at Sensei Wilko Vriesman’s dojo in Amsterdam. Having a woman as my teacher is a new experience I’m welcoming at this point in my life. Both Sensei Ishikawa and Sensei Vriesman encouraged me and I became enthusiastic again about the art, so I started training for my Ni-dan (second black belt) exams immediately after finishing the writing of this dissertation.

### **Shizentai**

While practicing Aikido, which to me is a form of communication with your partner on the mat – and therefore a form of social constructionism or AI, at a certain point it becomes necessary to transform into a state of mind where one is no longer ‘thinking’ about what to do, what technique to use. The body takes over. This happens after years of training. When looking at Aikido as a form of communication in partnership with the other person it is also possible to translate the communication into what we do when working together. In both forms of communication it would be interesting to look at what happens if both parties go to a state of *Shizentai*. While looking at the experience or story of your partner at work you will be able to keep an open mind and be truly curious when you put yourself in the state of *Shizentai*. The practice of how to be in the state of *Shizentai* is explained in earlier in this chapter. In order to show the importance of this state, I’ve created a new principle for AI, which will help to stay alert to the fact that the state of *Shizentai* could help to make AI into a future forming research approach. In the next chapter the BedrijfsAikido organization is talked about.

### **BedrijfsAikido in the Netherlands**

*Aikido*, nowadays, is often used as a way to show how communication in organizations can be changed. Five years ago a group of Dutch Aikido-ka’s (people studying the art of Aikido) started a new business together, they called



the organization: [www.BedrijfsAikido.nl](http://www.BedrijfsAikido.nl)<sup>20</sup>. Their main goal is to show people in organizations, teams, and education the added value of Aikido. The group works with the following items: Organization Development – Education – Coaching – Sports at the office – Empowerment in public sector – Vitality.

Perhaps you have noticed in the items that Research is not part of their curriculum yet. In 2015 the group will be looking at additional services to offer to clients and I am in the process of writing a proposal, based on this dissertation, to add Research to the fields. After their first five years of practice it becomes more and more interesting to see what the added value has been of using Aikido in businesses. One way of discovering that is to use the validation approach in AI that was discussed earlier in this chapter. In the next chapter I share information that was in the Workshop Research 2.0.

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<sup>20</sup> Freely translated it means Organizational Aikido, the main goal of the group is to introduce Aikido as a way of intervention in change.



## Research 2.0

I joined two TAOS workshops (Research 2.0) in Amsterdam, facilitated by Celiane Camargo-Borges and Kristin Bodiford.

In the July 2014 version of the workshop Celiane and Kristin provided us with an outlook on research. The graph below is a visual representing the ideas on the paper Camargo-Borges and Bodiford published in the *AI Practitioner* (2014).

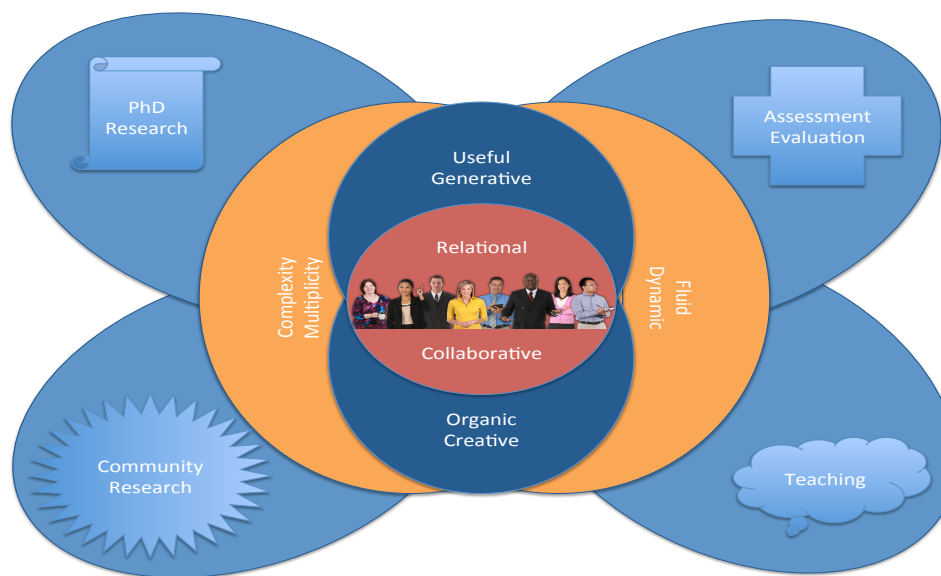


Figure 26: Research 2.0 (Camargo-Borges & Bodiford, 2014)

On Relational Collaborative (the mid point of the picture) they say that the focus is on ‘how’ we will engage in research together. In the ‘how’ we look at processes and structures that support co-creation. In the ‘how’ there is room for reflection and reflexivity. But also there is room for curiosity and responsiveness.

In my research the ‘how’ is shown through implementing the AI processes and structures in order to support co-creation. The researchers through the AI interviews bring in reflection and reflexivity. NOVI University has asked for a new set of reflection questions for the Bachelor students. I will talk more about this in the –Delivering the Future- section of this dissertation.

On Useful Generative (above the mid point), Camargo-Borges and Bodiford say that “research translates into practice” by actionable knowledge where the inquiry is connected to the needs of the involved (the stakeholders). The inquiry is situated in the local context and has the potential to generate new possibilities. With this research all those involved, the stakeholders, create a local context, being the Bachelor, Master or Ph.D. ‘world’. This shows the connectedness to the

needs by the stakeholders. Although much has been written about the new possibilities that AI create for organizational development, there has not been a lot written on what the impact is on the researcher, of using AI in that research.

On Complexity Multiplicity (left hand side of the mid point) Camargo-Borges and Bodiford say that engaging complexity and multiplicity can be the new soil for action. They further say that different theories and voices are seen as resources, which create a richer understanding and expand our views. Through that, patterns of relatedness and interconnections become more visible. In my research complexity and multiplicity are created through the voices of students in the Bachelor, Master and Ph.D. settings.

On Organic Creative (below mid point) Camargo-Borges and Bodiford say that responsiveness to local contexts confirms the unfolding of the research, which can be seen as a journey. The emergent process is embraced by keeping openness and trust of the process of embracing complexity. Perhaps because of the duration of the research process that I went through, I did come to see the research as a journey, which I have enjoyed. However I could say I enjoyed it too much because, now, at the end of the journey I am missing the opportunities to talk to people on the subject. This encourages me to look at new journeys ahead!

On Fluid Dynamic (right side of mid point), Camargo-Borges and Bodiford say that the research is a continuous ongoing, creative practice, where the collective creativity changes the process. The research, and the collective, is open to reconstruction, and new meaning. Because of the many voices, it is important to hold the plan lightly. This can only happen when one is being flexible and attentive. This last part of the picture is very important to me, personally. During the journey of my research I have had many occasions where things did not work out the way I planned them. There have been several ideas that I was working on that ended up not being possible. Holding the plan lightly made it possible to keep going. At the end of the day, it turned out that only the usage of Appreciative Inquiry remained a base for my research.

The remaining items (Ph.D. Research, Assessment Evaluation, Community Research and Teaching) are the areas where Relational Collaborative gets its input. In the next chapter the methodology used in this research is shared.

## Discovering the path, methodology

In this chapter a transparent overview is given on the methodology used in this research. First the people involved in the interviews are introduced.

### The Interviews

The following people took part in the interviews, I call them researchers and with this chapter I'm answering the question 'who are the researchers?'

Table 10: People Interviewed in Research

<b>Bachelor Group</b>	<b>Name</b>
Novi	Edwin Groenenberg
Novi	Jos Heesen
<b>Master Group</b>	<b>Name</b>
Taos	Mille Duvander
NHTV	Inge Sari Panama
NHTV	Fong Qiyue, Joyce
Utrecht	Marloes van Bussel
<b>Ph.D. Group</b>	<b>Name</b>
Taos	Gita Baack
Taos	Jacqueline M. Stavros
Nyenrode	Irene Jonkers
Taos	Jody Jacobson
Taos	Jeff Fifield
Taos	Jeanie Cockell

First I'll introduce the two Bachelor students at NOVI University of Applied Sciences. They have used AI in their research.

### Edwin Groenenberg

Works at the IT organization of the University of Tilburg, in the Netherlands. He has used AI in his research through holding a small AI summit with the people of his team, including his manager. His thesis is about the restructuring of the IT organization in the university. A description of how Edwin used AI in his research is shared in the -Designing the future- phase of this dissertation.

## Jos Heesen

Jos works as service manager at the IT organization of Dienst Justitiele Inrichtingen<sup>21</sup>. This is the governmental organization in the Netherlands dealing with all prisons. Jos used AI in his research through holding an AI summit with two teams that are going to work together. His thesis is about how these groups can create a good level of communication and working together. A description of how Jos used AI in his research is shared in the –Designing the future- phase of this dissertation.

## Mille Themsen Duvander

Mille is now a Ph.D. student with Prof.dr. David Cooperrider. She and I talk about the process of doing research monthly. Mille told me that she used AI in her Master research and that is why I've included her on the list. Her Ph.D. study is also on AI, but since that process is not finished yet, we decided to look only at the Master research process. Mille wrote about her Master thesis:

The subject of my master thesis was an inquiry into Appreciative Inquiry in order to find out more about the position of the body in AI processes.

The title of the thesis: Appreciative Embodiment. A critical investigation and development of Appreciative Inquiry in a bodily perspective

Executive summary:

This study is based on the organizational theory Appreciative Inquiry (AI) that develops organizations by focusing on the strengths and resources available within the organization. The investigation concerns the position bodies have in this type of organizational communication, and the study is placed in the field of interpersonal communication. The empirical basis contains three parts: 1. Observations, video recordings, interviews and field notes from a social constructionist conference. 2. Carrying out a workshop in AI with focus on bodily experiences. 3. Interview with two skilled practitioners within AI. To illustrate the importance of embodiment I have developed a model, which is called IMAGE and a concept that is named Appreciative Embodiment. This forms the basis for a discussion on how the body can be understood. The study concludes, on the basis of theoretical discussions and empirical data, that it can be difficult to provide a discussion of the body in relation to AI and to communicate the message to participants the workshop. On the other hand, the workshop succeeded overwhelmingly concerning the body in practice, since most of the participants could feel their bodies in the exercises. Overall, the study concludes that reflecting and doing the body enrich AI in both theory and

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<sup>21</sup> DJI is the IT service organization for the Justice Department

practice. Partly because it allows you to settle and integrate the energy that is often created, and partly because it opens up a further dimension in which to experience, acknowledge and communicate.

## Inge Sari Panama

Inge has written her own story:

My name is Inge Sari Purnama. I am 24 years old. I am an Indonesian and I came to the Netherlands almost three years ago to pursue my master study at NHTV Breda, The Netherlands. My master program is called Imagineering. It is basically a study about business innovation from the experience perspective. I graduated from the program last February. In order to graduate from my master program, I need to conduct a research within a company. Because of this, I had the opportunity to work with Amsterdam Marketing in Amsterdam Metropolitan Area. Amsterdam Marketing has a project called Amsterdam Metropolitan Area. In this project, Amsterdam Marketing is focusing to work together with entrepreneurs surround Amsterdam Metropolitan Area, so they want to support the whole concept from the project itself. Therefore, me, as a researcher need to find a way or a concept that can help to bring all the entrepreneurs to support the project. By knowing that I need to deal with so many people from different backgrounds, I realize that Appreciative Inquiry was the most suitable concept to approach these people. I used an Appreciative Inquiry concept to create the questions for my interviews with all people who are involved in the project. By using Appreciative Inquiry, I believe it helps me, as a researcher to create a conversation instead of an argument with all my correspondence. It is very important to highlight that having a conversation with my correspondents were really effective for me to gain more insight and information from them. It creates a space where they were more comfortable to communicate their thoughts, ideas, opinions and etc.

## Fong Qiyue, Joyce

Research Period: May – Jul 2012. Age (in 2012): 30 years old

Research Topic: How to transform the Materia brand from product-driven, to network-driven from a largely technical brand to a more human brand?

Joyce lives in The Netherlands, and is a Business Solution Consultant for Collaboration Applications in DSM.

Her thesis was about how to apply practice-based Imagineering research to Materia, an innovative materials company based in Amsterdam. The business need was to explore how to transform the company from a very technical-driven to a more human-centric business. She devised and employed the Canvas Appreciation method to ask employees describe appreciatively the meanings of very subjective topics that were close to the heart of Materia: inspiration,

collaboration, innovation, co-creation. This canvas enables the interviewee to use paper, pens, colors, space and words to describe the meanings, like an artist.

## Marloes van Bussel

Marloes works as an education consultant for MBO, working in the field of development of exams, quality assurance and professionalizing teachers and management. She feels a great need to help improve the quality of education. For her improvement is done through change and learning. She likes to address change in a creative form and uses AI techniques and principles. To use AI for her means that she gets creating positive energy to transform. Applying AI for Marloes means that it gives people self-confidence and it inspires. In her master in education she used AI to look at how different it was in comparison to problem solving. Both approaches can be used to transform. Both approaches have a goal to better and change a situation. Looking at the various possibilities most important is the process of learning, the development of the people in the organization. In her research she concluded that the use of Appreciative Inquiry has more learning potential to experiment, innovate and renew. Still, she thinks that better a given case is also necessary for organizations. This is why she says that both approaches add value.

## Gita Baack

Gita's information is below:

Dissertation Title: An Exploration of Resilience in the Generation After the Holocaust: Implications for Secondary Inheritors of Trauma, Displacement and Disastrous Events – This dissertation began with the motivation to help build an understanding of resilience as demonstrated by the second generation children of Holocaust survivors by exploring the question: How is it that the members of a generation who have been brought up under the shadow of the Holocaust and its losses, are able to not only to get on with their lives, but to be successful and helpful and compassionate with their fellow human beings”? Other questions emerged during the course of the research offering the possibility to universalize this discussion and give meaning to 2nd generations who have inherited the guilt and sorrow from all sides of the Holocaust: the perpetrators; the bystanders; the collaborators; the resisters, the rescuers, or the partisans; as well as 2nd Generation children and adults affected by other devastating events: Native Americans; Korean, Dutch, Vietnamese, Lebanese, Palestinian, Iraqi, Egyptian people including Sephardic Jewish people (includes displaced Jewish people from Iraq, Morocco, Egypt, Iran, Africa, Yemen). This led to two additional questions: How can other 2nd Generations affected by the all sides all of the Holocaust, the perpetrators, collaborators, bystanders, neighbors give meaning to their legacy for the sake of their inheritors? Globally, how can

successive generations affected by trauma, displacement and devastation get on with their lives and be successful, helpful and compassionate? Finally, I had a deeply personal question and that was to explore a felt memory I have carried in my back since childhood that might explain how my siblings died under the Nazi régime. This led to a fourth question: Do we carry memory from one generation to another? ([www.taosinstitute.net](http://www.taosinstitute.net), viewed on website on November, 3 2014)

## Jacqueline M. Stavros

Jackie's information is below:

Dissertation title: CAPACITY BUILDING An Appreciative Approach – This dissertation is about A Relational Process of Building Your Organization's Future - *Your Organization's Driving Force is People*

The questions answered in this dissertation are:

What is capacity?

What is capacity building?

What is organizational capacity? What are the core capabilities that allow for organizational capacity?

What is multi-organizational capacity? What are the core capabilities that allow for multi-organizational capacity?

What is global capacity? What are the core capabilities that allow for global capacity?

## Irene Jonkers

Irene tells her own story: I have been working as a researcher for Nyenrode's Center for Sustainability, since 2008. Since 2013 I'm affiliated to the Research Chair of Prof. Dr. Danielle Zandee. I've been involved in a broad variety of research projects in the context of sustainability, mainly action research based. Through time I have developed a specialization in a societal and relational angle on sustainability. Trustful relationships and constructive dialogue between stakeholders are the basis of collective learning and development of the system they are part of. In January 2012 I have commenced my PhD-research on stakeholder cooperation in the context of social innovation projects. In my research I take a practice orientation and work from a constructivist stance. In a number action research projects I hope to learn how the development of constructive practices of cooperation can be catalyzed. Appreciative Inquiry is the main approach in my first case study, as its generative and relational notions fit both the project and research objectives nicely. This project, which started in January 2013 and is still running, concerns the ambitions of a Dutch health care organization to develop towards a model of 'sustainable health care service provision embedded in the local context of the client'. This organizational development is closely interlinked with a societal transition in the health care



sector. Together with a number of health care professional as our researcher we work with the 4D-model to create organizational change and build relationships with both internal and external stakeholders.

## Jody Jacobson

Jody's information is below:

Dissertation Title: Transforming "Accidental Adversaries" Dynamics in Client Systems and Ourselves - This dissertation is a story about a company that found itself entrenched in an escalating dynamic known as accidental adversaries. The dynamic stifles collaboration and innovation, and is a leading preventable cause of limited growth in organizations. The dissertation also tells the story of reconstructing the traditional consultants role from expert observer to reflexive coach and partner. The case that set this dissertation in motion took place at CT, Inc., a high tech company based in the Silicon Valley region of California, USA. The company had recently acquired a software company from which it imported a cadre of engineers and managers. Shortly following the merger, a new, high profile CEO was hired to leverage further development and delivery of a key technological breakthrough. At the time of the study, the company was being heralded widely in technology and business media both for its recent technical innovation and business turnaround. During the course of the project interviews, however, a different story began to unfold. Groups that needed to collaborate in order to innovate and grow the company, instead appeared to be working at cross-purposes, embroiled in a counter-productive adversarial dynamics.

## Jeff Fifield

Jeff's information is below:

Dissertation Title: How Might Appreciative School Leadership Meet the Needs of the 21st Century Schools? An Initial Inquiry - The purpose of this study was to explore how Appreciate Leadership might meet the needs of 21st Century schools. This study explored the current scarcity of research on Appreciative Leadership by exploring successful contextual Appreciative School Leadership practices and seeking to understand the conditions that sustain and extend the application of AL (Appreciative Leadership) in a school environment. This case study enquired into the essence of Appreciative School Leadership and reveals how Colegio Maya (the American International School of Guatemala) core administrators envision using Appreciative Leadership for the future of schools. The findings documented a successful Appreciative Leadership inquiry with CM core administration from a set period of time and suggested the grounded ecological conditions needed for the use of Appreciative School Leadership in the future. ([www.taosinstitute.net](http://www.taosinstitute.net), viewed on website on November, 3 2014)



## Jeanie Cockell

Jeanie's information is below:

Excerpted from Cockell, J. (2005). *Making Magic: Facilitating Collaborative Processes*. Pages 163 & 164. University of British Columbia.

The two major impacts on my practice of 'making magic' are, firstly, the feeling of being much more grounded in myself, more authentic, more present as a facilitator, who I am, and, secondly, the deepening of my tool kit, the increase in my resources, conceptual and applied. Both of these impacts allow me to be more confident in the work I do, to have faith that magic will happen, to forgive myself if it does not happen, to allow myself to be vulnerable and to have the courage to keep striving for magic. I am stronger in my location and my belief in the power of being who I am as I facilitate, trusting in the critical appreciative process, trusting in the structures, the caring, compassion and serious playfulness I bring to my work. I create spaces where human spirits/souls can interact with each other. I am appreciative of the diversity of my participants and critical of the social structures that impact them. I create spaces where people can be who they are, appreciated for who they are, appreciating each other for who they are. These spaces are places of possibility, the possibility of transformative learning and of 'making magic.'

As a result, more work is coming my way especially in facilitating groups and teaching courses in Appreciative Inquiry, leadership and facilitation skills. All sorts of interesting possibilities are opening up and developing further. I feel, like Palmer (2000), that I have found my inner calling, my vocation that is "a gift to be received" (p. 10).

Please note that this text is used again later in this document used again, since Jeanie was one of the people who I worked with to co-create another dialogue on 'impact'.

## Questions asked

For the interviews generic AI questions were used. I have used semi-structured, in-depth interviews where the theme's *Best experience, Values, Core life-giving factor, and three wishes* formed the structure. The questions asked are:

### *Best experience*

Tell me a story about the best times you have had during the time of your research. Looking at your entire experience, recall a time when you felt most alive. Who else was involved? Describe the event in detail.

### *Values*

What are the things you value about yourself and your research?

Without being humble, what do you value most about yourself – as a human being, friend, parent, citizen, and so on?

When you are feeling best about your research, what do you value about it?

### *Core life-giving factor*

What do you think is the core value or factor that allowed your research to pull through during difficult times? If this core value or factor did not exist, how would that make your research totally different than it currently is?

### *Three wishes*

If you had three wishes for your research, what would they be? (Tell me about three wishes at the start, during and after). (Modified from Mohr & Watkins, 2002)

What was the impact on your research or life, using AI as a research method? (Question added after talking to Jeanie Cockell)

The interviews were held either through Skype or in written form. All interviews were done in 2014. A description of the stories is shared in the –Dreaming the future- phase of this dissertation. Now I'd like to share the defining process for this research.

## Defining the process, methodology of process

In January 2014 I was asked to become Associate Professor in Relational Research and Organization Transformation at the NOVI University of applied sciences in Utrecht. With this opportunity came the option to ask Bachelor students to help co-create this research by applying AI into their research plans. I have added students to the list that were able to complete their research within the timeframe of my work.

Because I wanted to include other levels of education in my research, Celiane Camargo-Borges suggested I include Master students, from the NHTV University in Breda (Netherlands). I am an external assessor for their students. This allowed me to include master students, who are using AI in their work, in my research group.

The fact that I'm a Taos Associate made it interesting for me to include the Ph.D. students from the Taos Institute in my work. This group was the biggest, and very enthusiastic about my request.

Most of the interviews took approximately one hour, through Skype. Except for the conversations with Jeanie Cockell and Jody Jacobson, which lasted longer.

Previously I only knew Mille Themsen Duvander; all other people were new to me when I began the interviews. An exception is the Bachelor student Jos, who I had in one of my Research classes at the NOVI University of applied sciences.

During the interviews I made mind-maps of the things that were said. After all of the interviews were done I created a large mind-map of all interviews, clustering them in the five different areas (question theme's): Best Experience, Values, Core life-giving factor, and Three Wishes, and the added Impact. Each person was shown through an own color in the map. Then I circled the most important words in each of the colors.

### 3. Dreaming the future

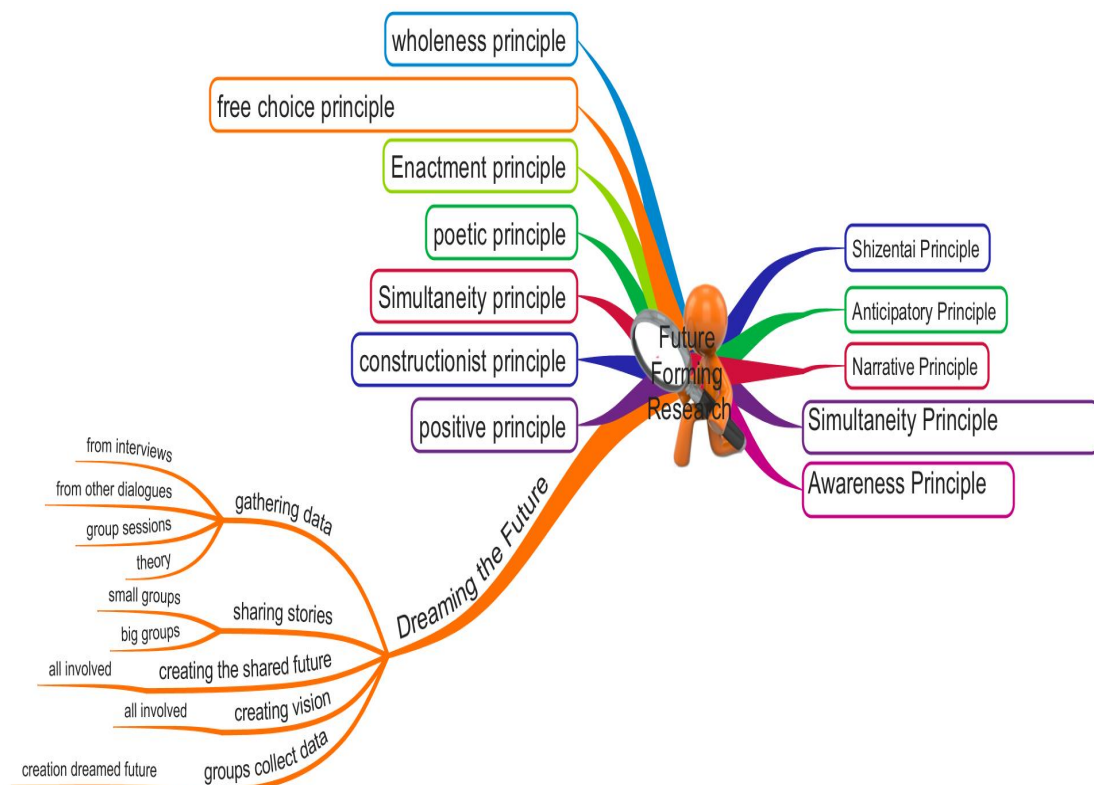


Figure 27: Dreaming the Future

## The Dream phase – the findings chapter

The Dream phase is to identify what might be and to envision results the world is calling for. *“One aspect that differentiates AI from other visioning or planning methodologies is that images of the future emerge out of grounded examples from the stakeholders past strengths”.* (Cooperrider et al., 2008, p.44)

In the –Dreaming the future- phase I talk about the stories that were shared. With these stories about research we can identify what might be. We can envision results the world is calling for.

## The stories

In this chapter I will be describing the stories which were told during the interviews. I have included mind-maps I created. They are spread over this chapter and not attached per story, since I have made a description per theme. The themes were created from the questions that were asked: best experience, values, core life-giving factor, three wishes, and impact.

## Best Experience

During the interviews all of the participants, or better said all researchers were brought back to the time of their research. During the question about their best research experience, the following words were used: interviewing them, being in contact with the people, the interconnectedness, sharing the work, listening to people with openness and curiosity and the contact with people in the organization that the researcher was working at.

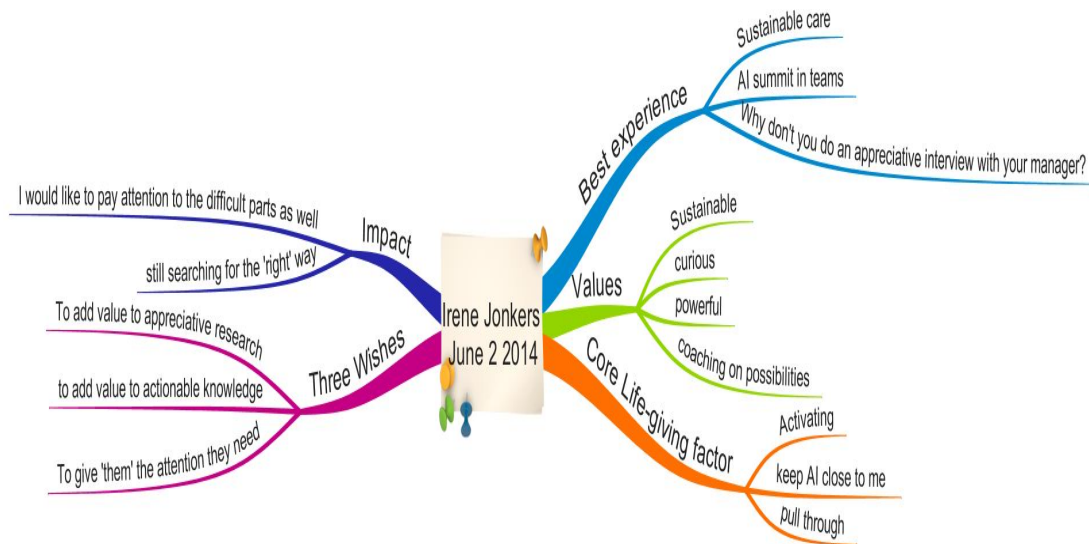


Figure 28: Mind-map interview Irene Jonker

Researchers were happy to discover that they know how to help others to make the shift. But also the fact that improvising was part of the work meant a great deal to them. The narrative about the sense of belonging was very evident, during the interviews.

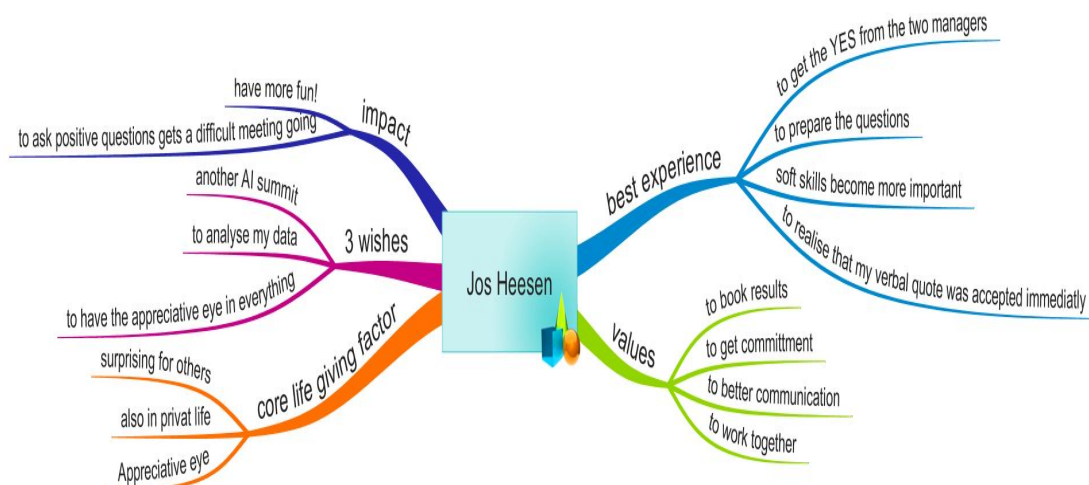


Figure 29: Mind-map interview Jos Heesen

# Values

During the questions about values, it became clear that there is no single value that makes a good researcher. The words curiosity, honesty, purity, commitment, focus on what works, learning the language of the system you're in, optimism and family were mentioned. The researchers like to see the best in others. They think it is important to listen and really hear what people say.

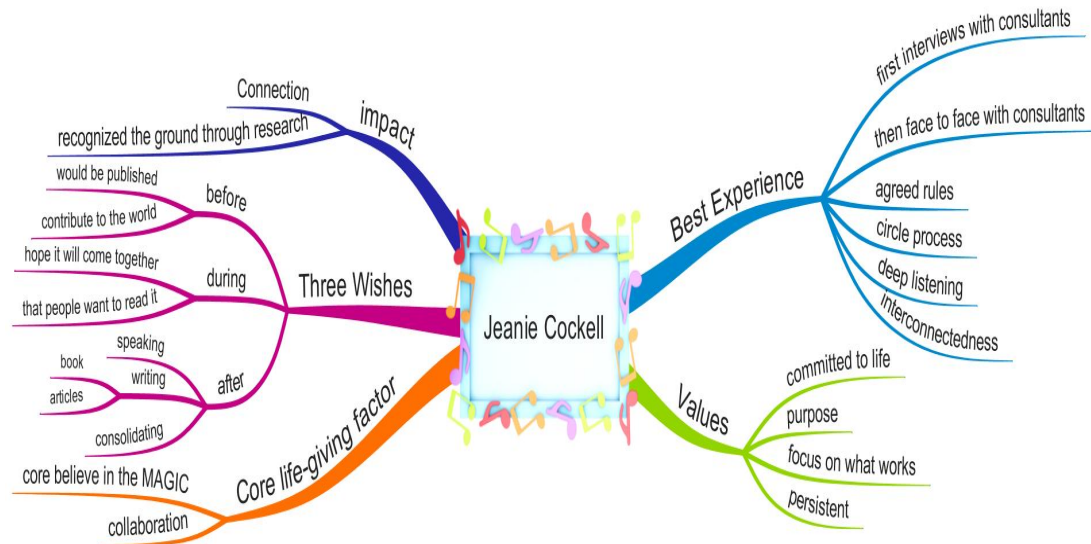


Figure 30: Mind-map interview Jeanie Cockell

Jeff called it 'thought catcher' and Jody talked about 'a box of treasures'. Jos mentioned that he was so thrilled to see how he and others changed from being skeptical to enthusiast. To him, it showed that working from the heart and using soft skills was giving him new opportunities. Edwin talked about his overview, his creativity, and his capability to get things done.

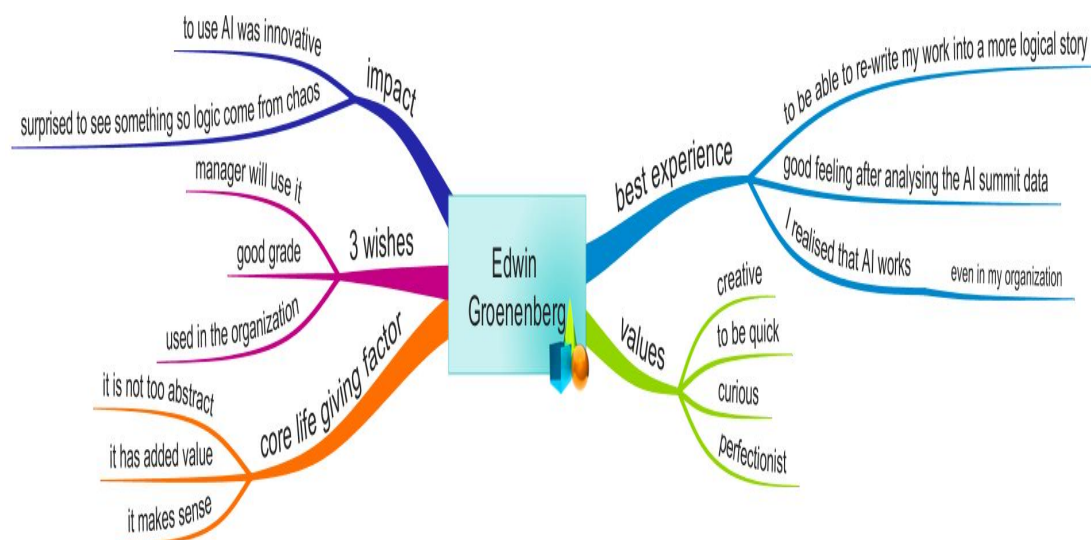


Figure 31: Mind-map interview Edwin Groenenberg



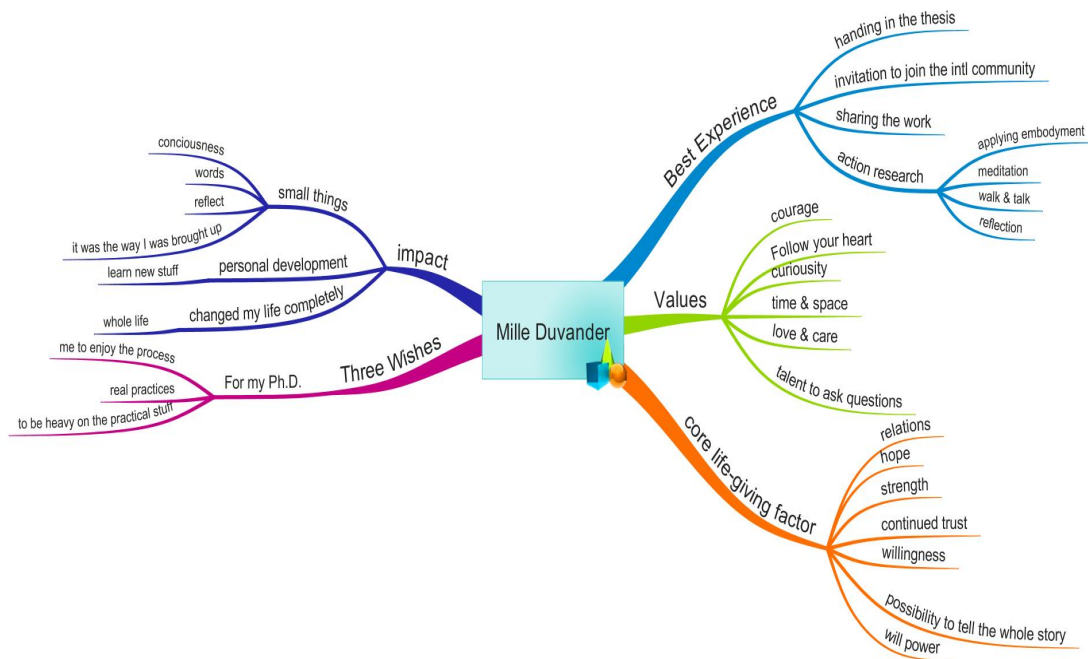


Figure 32: Mind-map interview Mille Themsen Duvander

## Core Life-Giving Factor

The Core life-giving factor questions gave a rich abundance of words. From 'to give attention that is needed', to 'I want to keep things close to myself' through to 'belief', 'persistence' and 'confidence'. Jeanie talked about 'belief in Magic', which is the main theme of her Ph.D. dissertation.

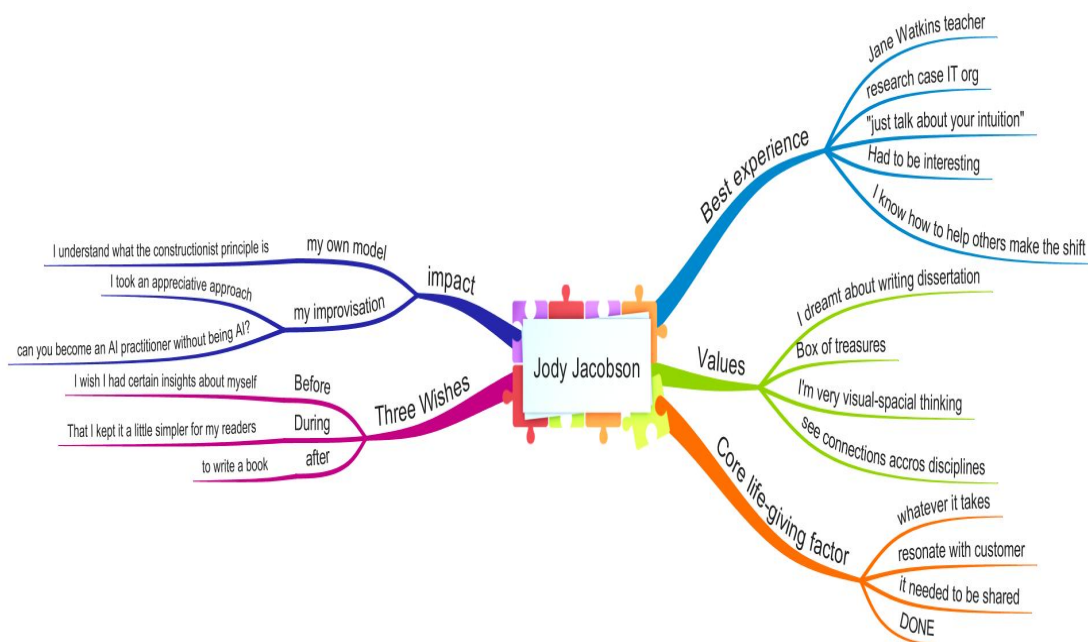


Figure 33: Mind-map interview Jody Jacobson



For Jody, the thought of being finished kept her going. Mille talked about 'strength', 'willingness' and 'will-power' and Jeff talked about 'wanting to live it'. Inge talked about 'faith' and how she needed others to restore that faith. Jos talked about commitment and drive. He thought that helping people to crossover, and start sharing stories was the main value he saw. Edwin talked about the fact that as his research made sense to the people in his team, it has value and relevance.

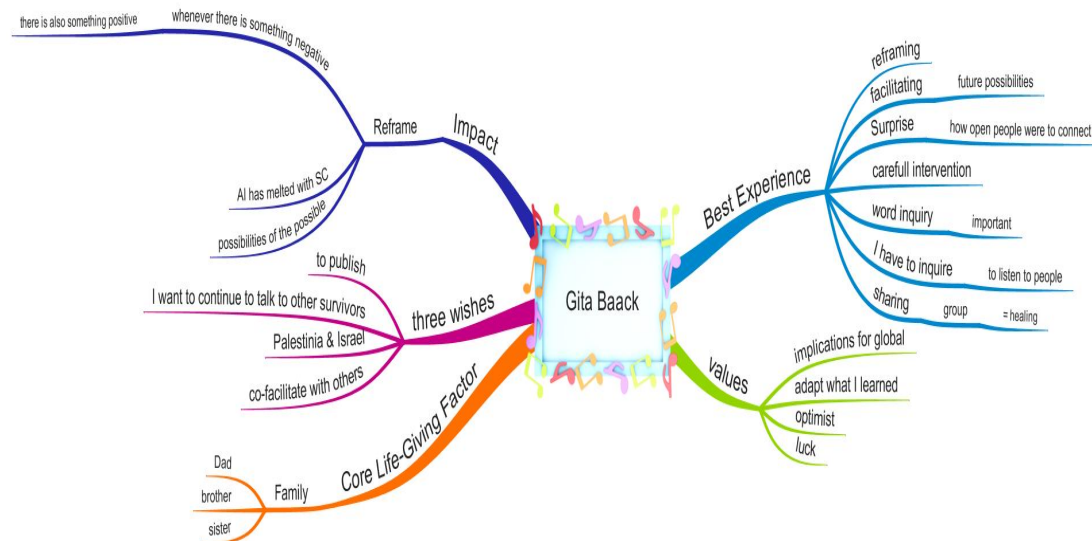


Figure 34: Mind-map interview Gita Baack

## Three Wishes

In the questions regarding the Three Wishes many people mentioned having 'more time', by which they meant time to finish projects and more time to do the research. These look like an important keyword for the researchers. Another word which was used quite often was wish: the wish to publish. (Some of the researchers who I spoke to have fulfilled that dream.) Jeanie and her partner, Joan, have published a book about Appreciative Inquiry in Higher Education (Cockell & McArthur-Blair, 2012). Jody is also about to have a book published.

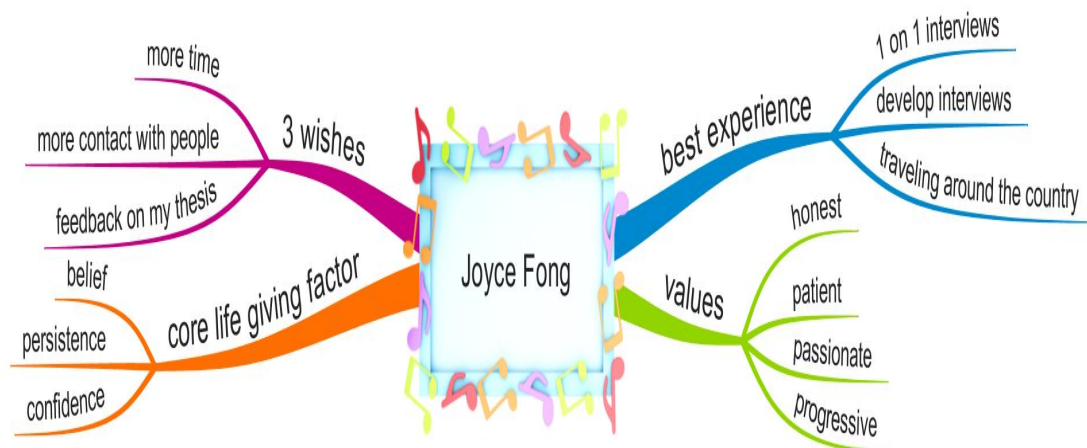


Figure 35: Mind-map interview Joyce Fong

Jeff was happy he had a large group to work with and one of his wishes was to build a learning practice. Mille was looking forward to enjoying the process of getting her Ph.D. and hopes to stay in the here and now while working on it. Gita wants to keep talking to survivors. And she wishes that her children read her dissertation.

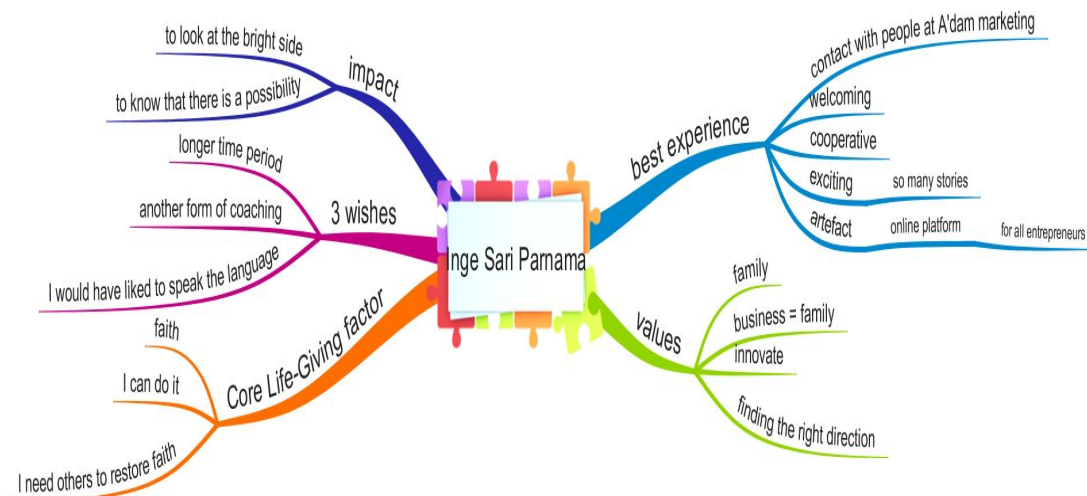


Figure 36: Mind-map interview Inge Sari Panama

Marloes is looking forward to having more time to keep asking AI questions. Irene wishes to add actionable knowledge. Jos wanted to have other summits in his team, on different subjects. He was also wishing for ways to learn to have an appreciative eye in all areas of his life. Edwin wished for his research to be used in the organization and is hoping for a good grade.

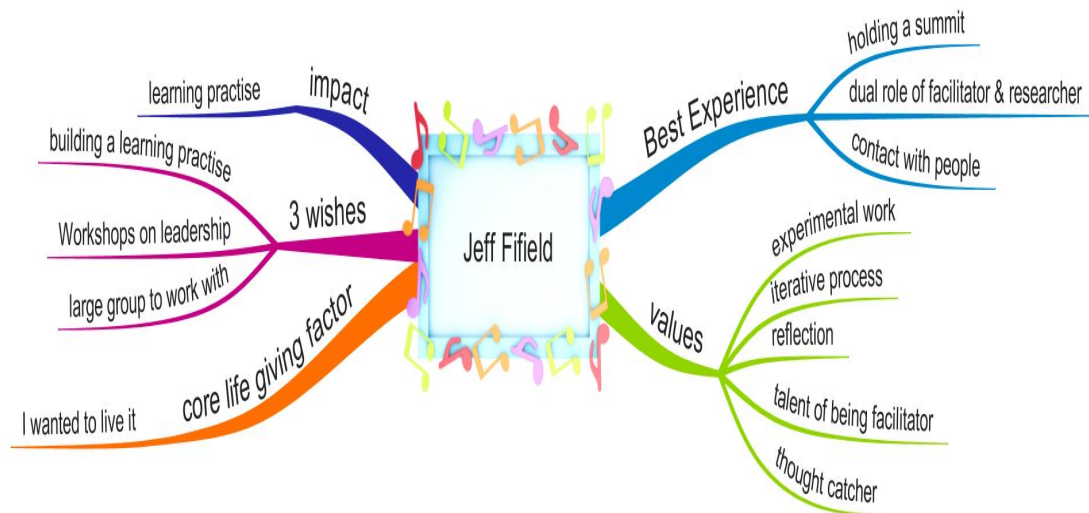


Figure 37: Mind-map interview Jeff Fifield



Figure 38: Mind-map interview Marloes van Bussel

## Impact

In the question about the impact, of working with AI in research, there were many different kinds of answers. Irene wanted to talk about the various challenges she encountered. She is still searching, for what AI can bring her and the organizations she works with. Jeanie recognized ground through her research. And Jody realized that she took an appreciative approach. She realized what the constructionist principle means and that totally changed her AI practice.

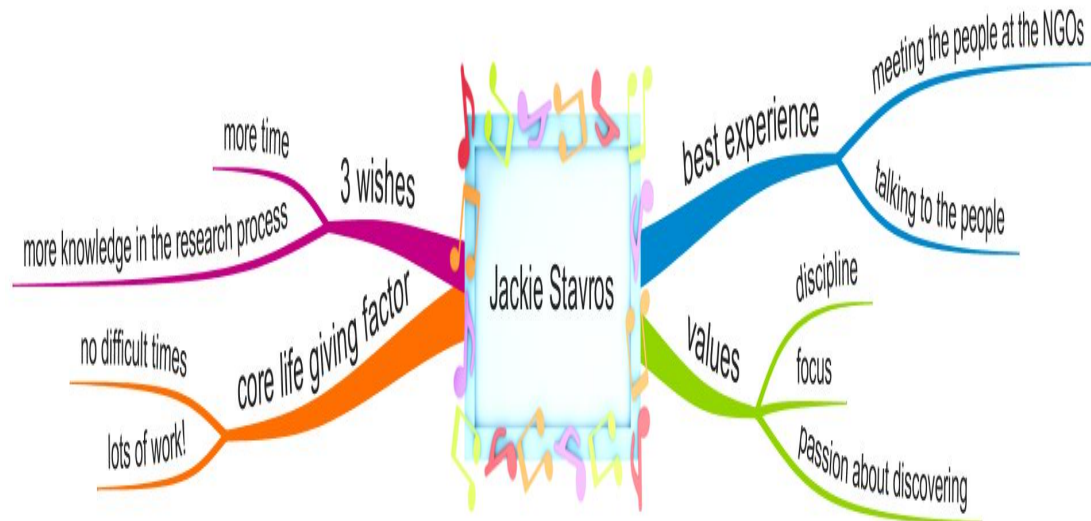


Figure 39: Mind-map interview Jackie Stavros

Mille talked about how working with AI has changed her life completely. And Gita talked about 'reframing' when I asked her on what the impact was on her. Jos talked about how the different way of asking questions has helped him and made the interviews much more interesting. He says: "I had fun!"

Edwin talked about his feeling of being surprised; he was surprised that from chaos came something good. He was happy about the extra twist that AI gave his research.

The following mind-map is the one in which I have included all data out of the interviews:

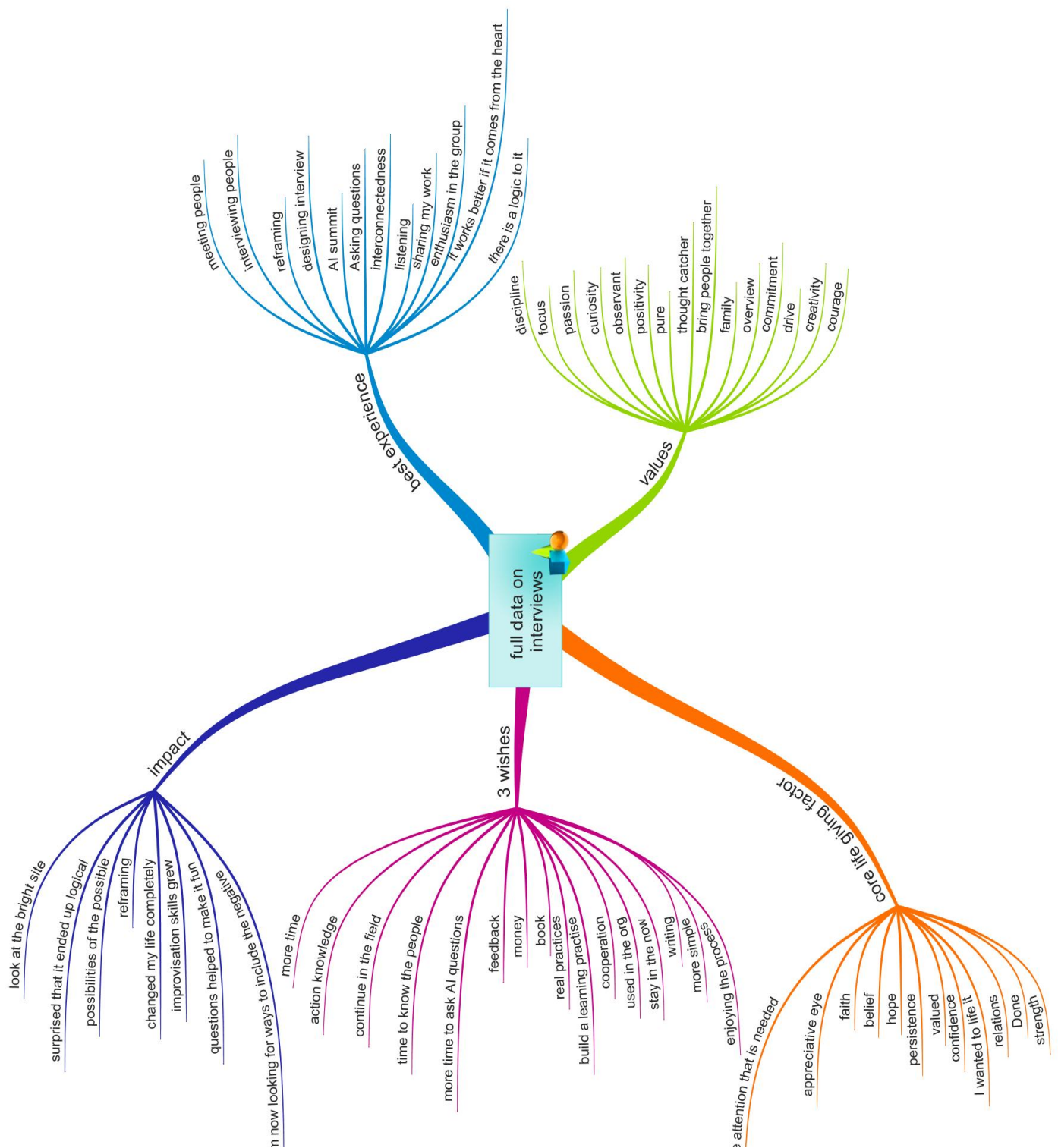


Figure 40: Mind-map all data interviews

## Co-creation Wondering on Impact.

With a feeling of longing for more, I decided to ask five fellow researchers to 'talk' to me about the impact that working with AI (or a relational approach to research method) has had on them. The people I asked to co-create this part of my research were Celiane Borges, Kristin Bodiford, Joan McArthur-Blair, Jeanie Cockell and Jody Jacobson.

My decision to work with these researchers was based on the feeling I had when talking to them. Celiane and Kristin I met during Taos workshops. Jody, Jeanie and Joan were all Ph.D.s from Taos who had used AI in their research. Here are the stories they shared.



## Joan McArthur-Blair

### Wondering About Impact

In answer to your question “the impact that doing relational research (using Appreciative Inquiry, or another form) has had on your personal life,” I find myself wondering about the impact of seeking understanding in community and how it has changed me over the years.

First, let me set a little bit of the context. I am currently a consultant who works with organizations of all kinds to surface their strengths and deepen their recognition of possible futures. I came to consulting after 30 years in higher education in positions from faculty to president. For my entire career, I have most deeply cared about learning and the ways in which we engage with new skill and new knowledge.

In my doctoral work, I did a relational study on the inner life of leaders (what morally, spiritually and ethically guided their work) and made this comment about how the study changed me:

*As I worked with the words of leaders, I began to hear the possibility of education championed and the courage with which leaders work for that possibility. It gives me hope that in my own leadership, I can continue to work for social justice and the “good” of education. Have I changed doing this inquiry? Yes, and profoundly. Doing this inquiry has encouraged the work I was already doing around the creation of reflective spaces, such as the “Labyrinth and Leadership Workshop” for leaders. It has encouraged me to continue to write more about the notions of the inner life. Most of all it has encouraged me to continue in the work of public education leadership and to lead in a way that is “good.”*

*That said, as Pope John XXIII stated: “It often happens that I lie awake at night and begin to think about a serious problem and decide that I must tell the pope about it. Then I wake up completely and remember that I am the pope” (Kornfield & Feldman, 1996, p. 351). This humorous note is about the fact that I do wake up surprised to find myself a Vice President and in that surprise, I find myself. I find the person I wish to be as a human and as a Vice President. I go into my day attempting to take with me the notion of pumping the iron of leadership and pulling upon the foundation of my inner life.*

As my career moved on through a presidency and to consulting, I took with me this notion of “good” and often pondered both the meaning of the word and the openness of it as a simple guiding principle in my life. Of course, it brings up questions of who is good and good as culturally coded and so on. However, it does offer a simple notion that has changed me over the years. I believe that doing relational research has at its core the concept of building meaning together with others and, in doing so, opening the door to arrive at common meaning, common possibilities and common direction. As we

socially construct using principles of Appreciative Inquiry that seek to lift up wisdom and hearts we are, in relationship, building something which can open to “good.”

After my doctoral research, I did a great deal of non-traditional research with communities and organizations where Appreciative Inquiry was used to collect ideas for a future that was co-constructed. This has changed me profoundly and continues to change me. At first, Appreciative Inquiry was an action research process to assist organizations, teams and systems to create future ideas and vision. Over time, the use of Appreciative Inquiry has become more personal. The principles guide my daily interactions and focus. I begin each day with a gratitude practice to bring to the surface what is strong in my life. I set an appreciative intention for the day and I ensure that I do one special joyful thing each day. Over the years, my practice of listening has deepened and my notions of research have also changed. I intentionally note and notice the research that is conducted inside organizations on a daily basis and help guide that research to be relational and to focus not just on the data but also on the process that created that data.

In closing:

### **The Red Chair**

You sit on my deck  
Nothing moves you.  
Neither the wind nor the rain  
You are always there,  
A quick dust and you stand  
Beautiful again,  
Color vibrant against the woods.  
Ready to comfort.  
To hold me while I think  
About possibility  
About the nature of good  
You offer up small wonders  
A squirrel darting by  
A butterfly hovering for a moment  
A humming bird drawn to your arm  
You teach me to listen, to watch,  
I am your willing student, open booked, eager.  
My white skin resting upon your deep deep red.



## **Kristin Bodiford:**

Using Appreciative Inquiry in my research opened new possibilities for what counts as research and this was aligned with my philosophies and values. It also demonstrated for me how much our own self is brought into research and contributes to the co-construction of what emerges. While I continuously reflected on my values, my contributions, the ways that I might influence research, bringing Appreciative Inquiry into the research process allowed for my role to be an active partner in the research process.

In particular, I was deeply impacted by a sense of relational ethic. For example, I could have chosen to focus on what is problematic with youth behavior in society, including gang violence, teen dating abuse, etc. But what would I be continuing to contribute to from a relational ethic standpoint? What language and messages would continue to be reinforced? Appreciative Inquiry and other dialogic methods allowed me as a researcher to reflect on the implications of the framing and language from the beginning of the inquiry process.

What emerged because of the framing and language from a relational research and Appreciative Inquiry lens impacted me deeply. Being able to see the beauty of the young people I worked with reinforced our interconnectedness and the magic of relationship. It changed my life and from what the young people share with me, changed theirs as well.

While other forms of research may be valid, appropriate, and needed in the world. I was able to make a choice as a researcher about how I wanted to engage in research through relational approaches that are aligned with my values and hopefully work to create better worlds, more generative possibilities. It gives me a place from which to hold my research interests in relationship with humanity.

## Jeanie Cockell:

In response to José's request to submit a story that illustrates the impact of using Appreciative Inquiry and other relational research on my personal life, I re-read these 2 pages from my EdD dissertation and was reminded how well they tell the story of the impact on my practice. I think my practice and personal life are intertwined so hope this works for José's purpose.

Excerpted from Cockell, J. (2005). *Making Magic: Facilitating Collaborative Processes*. Pages 163 & 164. University of British Columbia. Available on the AI Commons and Taos website. If anyone wants to read a short article based on this go to Jeanie's writing page on our website, <http://cockellmcarthur-blair.com>.

### Impact on my Practice

The two major impacts on my practice of 'making magic' are, firstly, the feeling of being much more grounded in myself, more authentic, more present as a facilitator, who I am, and, secondly, the deepening of my tool kit, the increase in my resources, conceptual and applied. Both of these impacts allow me to be more confident in the work I do, to have faith that magic will happen, to forgive myself if it does not happen, to allow myself to be vulnerable and to have the courage to keep striving for magic. I am stronger in my location and my belief in the power of being who I am as I facilitate, trusting in the critical appreciative process, trusting in the structures, the caring, compassion and serious playfulness I bring to my work. I create spaces where human spirits/souls can interact with each other. I am appreciative of the diversity of my participants and critical of the social structures that impact them. I create spaces where people can be who they are, appreciated for who they are, appreciating each other for who they are. These spaces are places of possibility, the possibility of transformative learning and of 'making magic.'

As a result, more work is coming my way especially in facilitating groups and teaching courses in Appreciative Inquiry, leadership and facilitation skills. All sorts of interesting possibilities are opening up and developing further. I feel, like Palmer (2000), that I have found my inner calling, my vocation that is "a gift to be received" (p. 10). The following story is an example of the kind of work that I am passionate about and my inner voice is calling me to do.

### ***Does that always happen?***

*After handing in the first draft of my thesis, I facilitated an Appreciative Inquiry and community development workshop for federal government employees to introduce them to some basic Appreciative Inquiry concepts and models to use in their work with First Nations' communities. It was a lot to do in four hours. None of*

*the participants were First Nations. Four participants were 'trainees,' expected to be there as part of their job training. The rest of the group included their supervisor, the trainer who had hired me, and two others who worked in the team in other capacities and who were interested in the topic. I could sense as the 'trainees' came into the room that some of them were not keen to be there. "Oh, dear," I thought, "this will be a challenge," feeling a little nervous about how they might receive me. I introduced myself (and my wand) and proceeded to build an appreciative climate. I presented some theory then they did appreciative interviews and group development of provocative propositions and images around the topic of working with First Nations' groups. I talked about the impact of power and privilege on people's ability to be appreciative. Throughout the session, I told stories and they told stories, stories of our experiences working with First Nations' groups. The transformation to a more engaged and connected group began in the climate setting and increased through the interviews gaining further momentum in the group work, and was fully apparent in the whole group debrief and closure. In the closing circle, passing my magic wand around, each person spoke in a very emotional way about the power of the experience and their appreciation of each other. So I wasn't surprised when Mary, who had hired me, called me later and asked incredulously, "does that always happen?" She was amazed by how much had happened, all the original outcomes and, more powerfully, the unexpected outcomes, the depth of emotions that people shared and the transformation of the group to an interconnected whole.*

*"How wonderful," I thought to myself, "she saw the magic." Palmer, P. (2000). Let your life speak: Listening to the voice of vocation. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.*

## Jody Jacobson

### **The impact that doing relational research has had on my personal life:**

*\*I use the word “practices” here to encompass research, living, working, and the all of it.*

One of my favorite book titles is *“Gifts Differing.”* I believe that each of us brings a different set of socially constructed narratives, *and* that these interact with and shape our differing constellations of neurological wirings, genetic predispositions, and other unknown and not yet knowable factors. Having come to the relational practices of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) and social construction (SC) through those of systems (systemic) thinking, biological sciences, and visual arts, I see great beauty in the aesthetics of this web of delicate inter-relationships and differing ways of seeing, being, working, and knowing.

I have been involved in AI research, consulting, and coaching practices for over a decade, and began to delve more deeply into SC about nine years ago. Practicing SC-based AI to the point where it has become part of my muscle memory has heightened my effectiveness and satisfaction as a seeker, weaver, and facilitator of meaning making. These have come to serve as key contours and bright threads in the tapestry of my being. Functioning as something akin to a Legos platform board (<http://www.goodnet.org/articles/what-will-you-build-on-worlds-biggest-lego-board>), AI and SC provide me with a solid foundation upon which to build and improvise in my life. Another key impact is that they help me to be more patient and appreciative of others whose ways of knowing and being are quite different from my own.

One of the things I love and appreciate most about AI is that its core principles and the SC philosophy are embedded in its research and practice *tools*. When faced with relational situations I find difficult or perplexing, I use AI tools—especially the learned skills of constructing and sequencing appreciative questions—to turn up my curiosity dial and maintain greater equanimity and presence. Having an effective mode and structure for inquiry makes my life easier, lighter, and more enjoyable.

In my marriage, these practices have helped me to inquire more deeply before assuming that I truly “get” what my husband really means and needs. As a parent, these tools have been especially helpful in supporting my son’s effort to define and articulate his own views as he transitions into adult life. As a highly intuitive person, the tools help me dial down my reliance on intuitive sense making by asking more and better questions.

I always described myself as a “closet extravert.” Becoming adept at the art of crafting AI questions has given me a means to “come out of the closet.” One of my personal high points was when a friend/client in the IT world introduced me at a networking event as “someone for whom listening is an active process that helps YOU get results.” I always had the listening down; it’s just that no one necessarily knew that I was doing it. Now, it is a relational process that is fun and natural, and that I can help others learn, which gives me great joy.

## Celiane Camargo-Borges

My story is a story of connection.

Embracing a relational perspective on creating and sustaining knowledge is a great invitation to connect to people. Connect not just in the way to get to know a community or organization but a way to value, acknowledge and appreciate different ways of living. It is also a shift from dichotomist ways of understanding - right or wrong, good or bad – moving in direction of acceptance of multiplicity of forms, having space for dialogue and negotiation.

My story is about my Ph.D. study.

I was investigating a health center, placed within a community and responsible for not just recovery of illness but health prevention and health promotion.

I was specifically looking at a group, composed by health professionals and patients, trying to understand their way of communicating and negotiating understandings on health/illness and treatment.

Embracing a relational approach on research I explore all discourses from all of the participants without categorizing them on the right discourse but really trying to make meaning of peoples talk and behavior.

By embracing this perspective I became more knowledgeable and appreciative of differences, also becoming curious and wanting to know more stories and perspective. That also helped me to engage in “solutions” that are closer to people involved, that are more useful to the stakeholder than just producing a theoretical body of knowledge for my Ph.D.

The focus of a relational researcher changes drastically into that direction: multiplicity; collaboration; curiosity, usefulness.

# Wondering on Impact

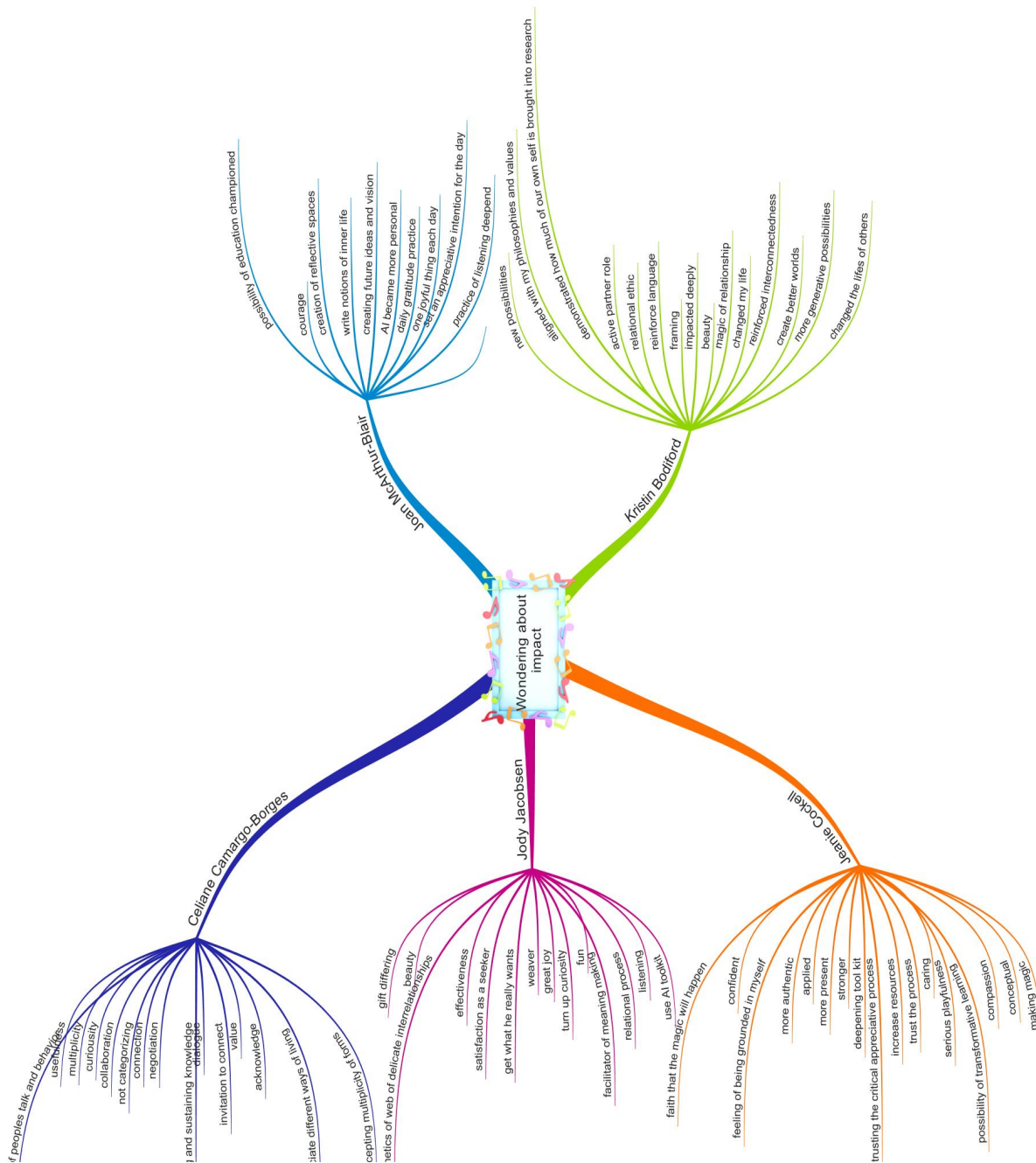


Figure 41: Mind-map wondering about impact

Wondering about impact, asking these five women to 'talk' to me about what impact is, has been a wonderful addition to the stories from the interviews. The rich language, shared by this group has been a delight to 'taste' from. Looking at the mind-map which I created from the shared stories I see Joan using words like courage, notions of inner life, gratitude practice, one joyful thing each day, appreciative intention, listening. In Kristin's story I see words like: possibilities, bringing You into your research, relational ethic, reinforce language, beauty, magic of relationship, life changing, reinforced interconnectedness, create better worlds, more generative possibilities, changed the lives of others.

Jeanie used the words: faith that the magic will happen, confident, stronger, trusting the process, caring, serious playfulness, compassion, making magic, the feeling of being grounded in myself, more authentic, more present, increase resources, possibility of transformative learning and conceptual.

Jody used the words: gift differing, beauty, aesthetics, web of delicate interrelationships, effectiveness, satisfaction as a seeker, weaver, turn up curiosity, facilitator of meaning making, listening, relational process, fun, great joy, get what he really wants.

Celiane used the words usefulness, curiosity, collaboration, connection, creating and sustaining knowledge, invitation to connect, value, acknowledge, appreciate different ways of living, accepting multiplicity of forms, make meaning of people's talk and behavior, multiplicity, not categorizing, negotiation, dialogue.

With each of these researchers, after talking to them in the interviews or in other environments like the TAOS workshops, I can hear them say the words. It is clear to me that the words they used are not only their story on impact; the words they use are typically them. The words we use create worlds, and these women live the words they speak and share. I want to leave these words without 'marking' them. I don't want to put a label on them. I want to share them as they were shared. While reading these stories over and over, I feel I'm going back to the state of *Shizentai* every time. Being in this state, to me, means I'm fully aware. I'm aware of everything around me. I feel curious. I don't know what the words mean to the person telling the story, but I do feel curious to find out. So in a shared future dream I could go on and on with this research; keep finding stories, keep listening to the words used and not make meaning, but stay in the state of *Shizentai*. In the next chapter the -Designing the future- element of this research is discussed.



## 4. Designing the future

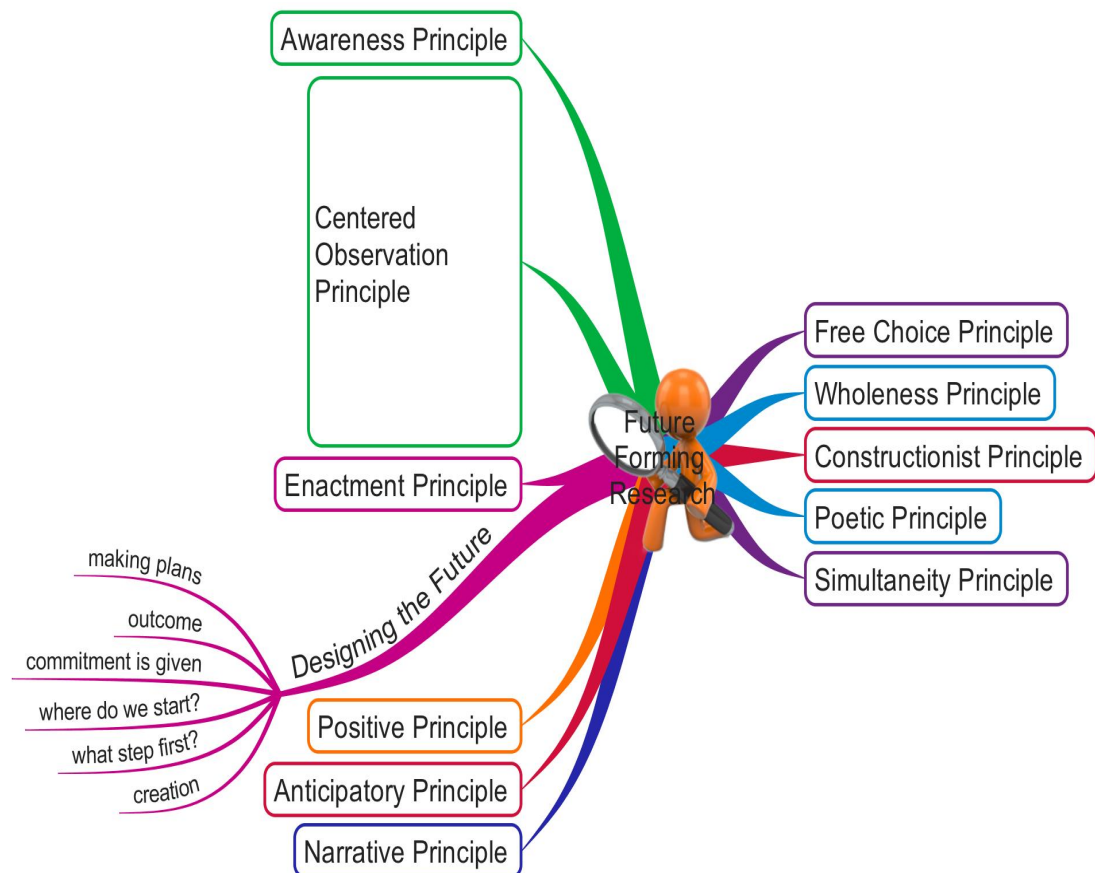


Figure 42: Designing the Future

## Designing the Future – The discussion chapter

In the Design phase we identify what should be the ideal. *“We co-construct the future design. This is the phase where the social architecture of this research is created. It is the place where provocative propositions are generated. These designs help move the system to positive action and intended results”.* (Cooperrider et al. 2008, p.46)

During the Design phase we take the things that come from the Dream phase and we start focusing on designing the future we dream of. What if the dreams become reality? What would that mean for us?

In the Design phase I focus on designing the future that was formed with the interviews:



And with the stories shared on impact.

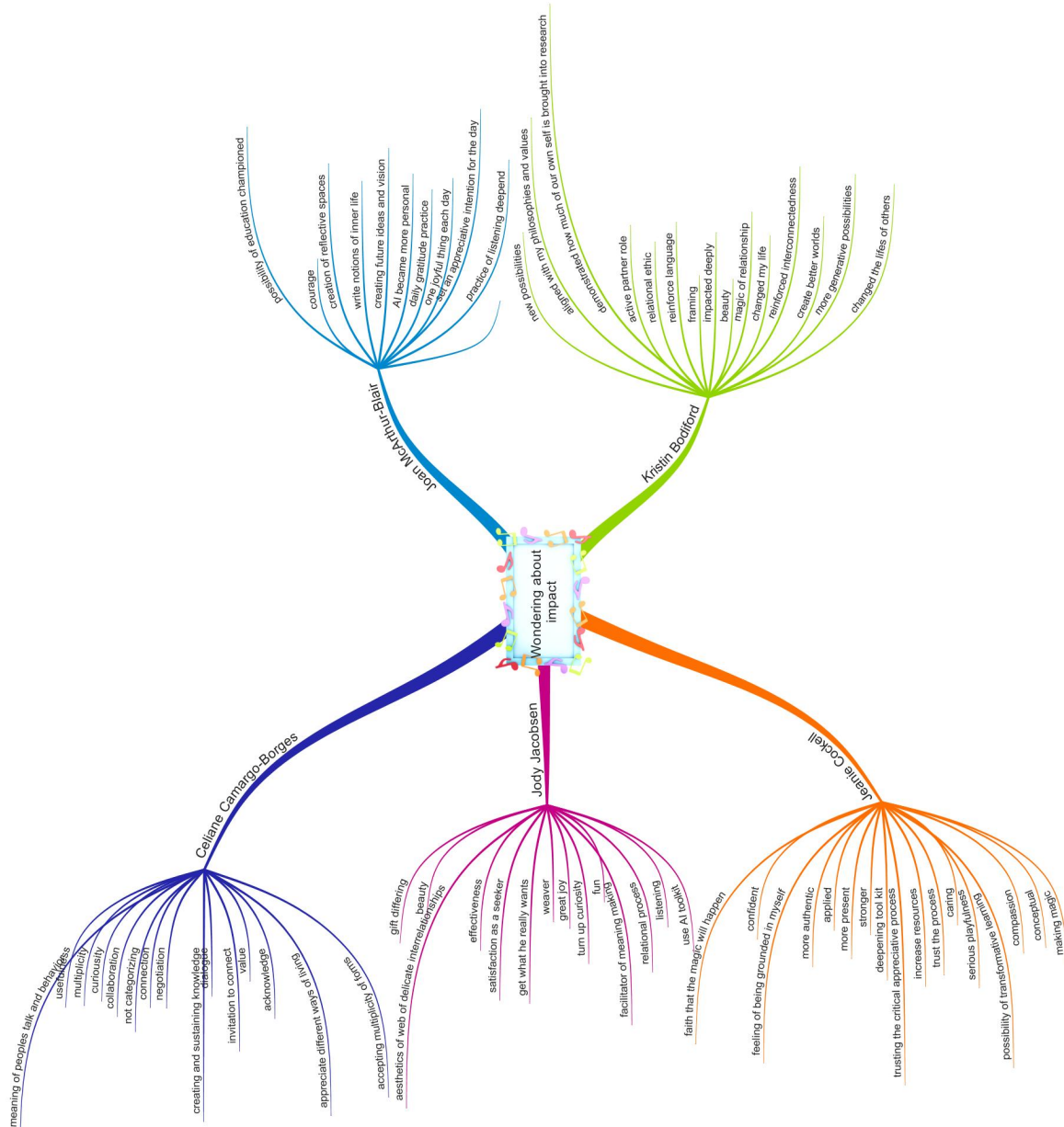


Figure 44: Mind-map wondering about impact

In working with AI we create provocative propositions in the Design phase. The process of appreciatively inquiring into a research on Appreciative Inquiry as a research method generated a framework for the dissertation. At the beginning of the process my provocative propositions were:

- Education is a learning experience through which stakeholders learn together and support and challenge each other.
- Appreciative Inquiry as a transformative force is common practice in action research; focus on what works well in a research becomes common practice.

During the research process in June 2014, the provocative propositions changed into:

- Appreciative Inquiry can help to lower uncomplimentary stress in the lives of researchers and practitioners.

In August 2014, after most of the interviews were held, the provocative proposition changed into:

- Sharing stories on Research.

In September 2014, after all interviews were done, the provocative proposition changed into:

- Working with Appreciative Inquiry as a research method gives all stakeholders a collectively developed dream on how they want to grow together, towards the perfect future.
- It is important to be aware of the mindset, of all stakeholders involved.
- We can change the mindset, or mental maps of stakeholders by asking different questions and use different words / stories.
- Research is future forming.
- Being in a state of *Shizentai* helps to make AI a future forming research approach.

I looked at the impact of working with AI in research in each of the stories that were shared.

In each of the stories I could see what was important to the researcher. I was able to use Appreciative Intelligence. Thatchenkery and Metzker (2006) write about Appreciative Intelligence: *"Put in a simple and metaphorical way, Appreciative Intelligence is the ability to see the mighty oak in the acorn. It is the ability to reframe a given situation, to appreciate its positive aspects, and to see how the future unfolds from the generative aspects of the current situation"*. (Thatchenkery & Metzker, 2006, p.4)

I wasn't used to the word Appreciative Intelligence, or reframing, for me it was about being in a state of *Shizentai*. *"The writer has a theory about how the world*

*works, and this theory is never far from the surface of the text.”* (Denzin, 2003, p. 117 as quoted by Simon in Simon & Chard, 2014, p. 18)

It is clear that working with AI, and living the principles has had a big impact on writing this dissertation. I am curious to see how others see this while reading this document. Have I been open to other opportunities which arise during the process of inquiry? I feel the need to reflect on that and realize I haven't given myself enough time to do so during the process of writing. I have not been in conversation enough with the researchers. At least that is what it feels like, now. Let me tell you about the NOVI case.

## The NOVI case

NOVI University of Applied Sciences is one of the few commercial institutes in higher education in the Netherlands. The Netherlands has a unique dual system in which high school graduates can attend either a research university or a university of applied sciences, the latter also known as Hoger Beroeps Onderwijs (HBO – higher vocational education). The 13 research universities in The Netherlands include general and specialized universities, and the Open University. The 51 HBO's include general institutions as well as institutions that specialize in a specific field such as agriculture, the fine and performing arts, and teacher training. Whereas research universities are primarily responsible for offering research-oriented programs, HBO's offer programs of higher professional education that prepare students for particular professions. HBO's are more practitioner oriented compared to research universities (Kappe, 2011, p.11). Different from the non-commercial institutes NOVI's directors have responsibilities as directors, shareholders and financiers of the education. In September 2014 NOVI's directors confirmed they want to create a trend-setting or innovative curriculum for the Bachelor programs, to be active in the year 2016. There are several reasons for taking such a step. One of them is the fact that not many educators 'listen' to the trends in the market, and NOVI wanted to change that for the information technology market. NOVI has a team of four associate professors, each with their own area of excellence.

Barry Derksen Ph.D., is research director at Business & IT Trends Institute, Manager at Stedin and associated professor at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and NOVI. His role in NOVI focuses on Innovation, Business and IT Trends. The Business & IT Trends Institute performs research on a yearly base to discover the trends in business and information technology. In this research, based on survey responses from 2572 organizations from North America, Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia, and Latin America, the top five management concerns were:

1. Business productivity and cost reduction
2. IT and business alignment
3. Business agility and speed to market
4. Business process re-engineering
5. IT reliability and efficiency.

The five most influential technologies were business intelligence, Cloud Computing, enterprise resource planning (ERP), Software as a Service/Platform as a Service (SaaS/PaaS), and collaborative tools. (Derksen, Noordam & van der Vlist, 2014, p. 9).

Yuri Bobbert is Associate Professor for NOVI and LOI University of Applied Sciences. His research area is Business Information Security. He combines his academic work with his role as Non-Executive Director of DPA|B-able, an organization advising companies in information-security.

Edward van Dipten is Associate Professor for NOVI. His research area is in IT Architecture.

As a group, we look at ways to help NOVI become a trend setting educational institute. Barry, Yuri and Edward support my efforts to give a more prominent role to research in the curriculum. Together we discover the different opportunities that combining the various areas of research form for NOVI.

Another reason for NOVI to look at opportunities for being innovative in its curriculum is the recent call from within higher education, students, researchers, professors and lecturers for

- Democratization of the University's governance structure;
- For staff and student representation at all levels of decision-making;
- To move away from financial and managerial motivations for decisions that affect the quality of education;
- To foster a genuine academic community that combines teaching and research;
- To limit the number of temporary contracts;
- To define equitable workloads in teaching, research and administration and creating visible and accessible paths to career development for temporary and permanent staff alike. (Rethink UvA, website March 8, 2015)



The Rethink UvA community joins in with platforms like Humanities Rally, Science in Transition and Hervorming Nederlandse Universiteiten. And they, in turn, join a worldwide chorus:

**Science in Transition joins a worldwide chorus** Of course; the Science in Transition initiative is not the first to notice that science has gone wrong. All over the world there is debate on how to assess research quality and make sure science does the right things. A few examples. \* The San Francisco Declaration On Research Assessment wants to put an end to the use of bibliometric parameters when deciding what researchers should receive grants or jobs. (December 2012) \* Newspaper The Economist made the problems in science a cover story (“How Science Goes Wrong”). It focuses on unreliable research and states that many errors in science go uncorrected. (October 2013) \* Nobel Prize winner Randy Schekman calls for a boycott of journals with high impact factors like Science, Nature and Cell. (December 2013) \* The Reproducibility Initiative wants to reproduce landmark studies since reproducing important papers in the current system is not rewarded, while it is of vital importance. \* Medical journal The Lancet wants to “increase value and reduce waste” in biomedical research. It discusses ways to do so in a series of articles. (January 2014) \* The US National Institutes of Health are exploring initiatives to restore the self-correcting nature of preclinical research. (January 2014) \* Promotion and grant committees should be reading through papers and judging research by its merit, says Nobel Prize winner Sydney Brenner. “I know of many places in which they say they need this paper in Nature, or I need my paper in Science because I’ve got to get a post doc. But there is no judgment of its contribution as it is.” (March 2014) \* Biomedical science in the US needs to be rescued from its “systemic flaws”, write Bruce Alberts and Harold Varmus in PNAS (March 2014). One of their recommendations is “to gradually reduce the number of entrants into PhD training in biomedical science — producing a better alignment between the number of entrants and their future opportunities—and to alter the ratio of trainees to staff scientists in research groups.” \* Academic environments often place more value on the discovery itself and less value on learning how to realize the potential benefit of its application. This should change, universities should foster implementation science, write three doctors in the New England Journal of Medicine (May 2014). \* The European Commission starts an online “Public consultation ‘Science 2.0’: Science in Transition” about the changing science system. The Science in Transition initiative features prominently in the background analysis. “In the Netherlands, an intensive debate has evolved on the basis of a position-paper entitled ‘Science in Transition’. The ongoing debate in the Netherlands addressed, among other, the issue of the use of bibliometrics in relation to the determination of scientific careers.” \* Former Secretary General of the European Molecular Biology Organization Gottfried Schatz analyses the effects of Big Science in an essay in Nature Reviews Molecular Cell Biology. The exponential growth of science has led to meaningless quantification, a crisis in peer review, reproducibility problems and the rise of fellowships (May 2014). \* Modify reward system for science to create reproducible and translatable research, says John Ioannidis in PLoS Medicine. With the current reward system “an estimated 85% of research resources are wasted”. (October 2014)

(Science in Transition website viewed March 8, 2015)

NOVI, with its part-time students might not yet receive complaints about students wanting to be more involved in the decision making processes, but with the call for change around the world, it is better for a small university to be ahead of this process and start involving students and lecturers in the process of creating an innovative curriculum.

In the Netherlands there are two different types of providers of higher education. There are in total 19.000 private, or commercial educators, working in the Dutch market of higher education. In 2010 this market earned about 3,2 billion euros in 2010. From the 19.000 private educators, the biggest part is freelance people, providing education. 5.800 Of these educators are small businesses (less than 250 employees). Most of the educators provide national education, only 7% works internationally. Not all of these educators provide accredited modules. One of the most important items is that many of the students in the private educator section are schooled people. 53% Of the education offered is higher education (Bachelor and Master). At this moment most education is still done through contact education. Other forms like e-learning and blended learning are expected to grow (Rosenboom & Tieben, 2012).

About 23% of the respondents, in NRTO's research in 2012 (Rosenboom & Tieben, 2012) show that they have experienced a stable revenue development in 2010. And they expected the same for 2011. The rest of the respondents were expecting a negative change in revenue. Most of the educators do not have an accredited Bachelor education. The market in which NOVI is competing, together with organizations like NCOI and LOI is a very competitive one, where they not only have to compete with each other, but also have to compete with educators who offer short running educational modules that are cheaper than the four year Bachelor programs, NOVI is offering.

From the NRTO Brancheverslag (NRTO, Branche verslag HO, 2013) research we see the competition for high quality and low price is very strong. The report from the Committee Bruijn (Bruijn, 2012) caused the NRTO to come up with a service document in which they say to combine both commercial and non-commercial educators curricula. They want the accreditation to be based on the same clusters. It is important however, that both commercial and non-commercial educators get a say in what should be in the educational profiles. The pressure is on for all Bachelor educators, after five modules were evaluated and received a negative mark. The five modules were taken from the Inholland institute (a non-commercial educator). And ever since the report this institute has worked hard to change concept, portfolio, regionalization, quality and culture.

Smith and MacGregor (1992) put together assumptions about learning. They said "Learning is an active, constructive process". They also said "the acts of intellectual processing- of constructing meaning or creating something new- are crucial to learning". Even in 1992 they already talked about how teachers should realize that we could no longer assume that our students' needs are all the same. People are diverse and so are our students. Smith and MacGregor also talk about how learning is "*mutual exploration, meaning-making, and feedback – leading to better understanding on the part of students, and to the creation of new understanding for all of us.*" (1992)

Like Smith and MacGregor I also use the description of learning communities in a broader sense than just a group of students sharing a classroom. For me a learning community is a group of stakeholders, containing students, former-students, teachers, and school staff, and preferably also stakeholders from the market, in the case of NOVI these are people working in Information Technology.

NOVI wants to be trend setting with its curriculum in both business administration and in information technology. In order to be trend setting it is important to keep in contact with what the market demands, so there is a necessity of following the trends that Dr. Derksen is finding in his yearly research. For the coming years it is important to have *Data Science* – with Big Data, large-complex, and often in real-time, *Information Security* – with preventive, detective, repressive and corrective measures, procedures that look at availability, exclusiveness and integrity, *Innovation and innovation management*, with the relevance of innovation, *Business Analyses & Enterprise engineering* with its holistic management to enlarge the effectiveness of organizations in the processes and technology, *Process management & Sourcing* with its best practice models like ITIL, ASL or BiSL, *Embedded Software* which integrates an electronic system in appliances, and *Internet of Things/Domotica*. But modules like Communication, Finance, HRM, and Management of Change, Leadership and Research should accompany these modules.

For this research the decision on what modules should go into the profile is not taken into account. What is important is how the modules are educated. Social Constructionism and AI can be a solid backbone. With the use of AI in teaching, both student and teacher work from the principles shared in the –Discovering the path- section of this dissertation.

In teaching Research, helping students to make their research future forming the use of AI is given. In the -Delivering the Future- section of this research the ‘how’ is shared.

To show how AI helped two NOVI students in their research project their stories are shared here in more depth. I have interviewed both Jos and Edwin as part of the researchers group for this dissertation.

After the AI Summit at NOVI I decided that sharing their stories about how AI has helped them might help the people in NOVI to trust the process and allow for a true AI Summit with all stakeholders.

## Jos Heesen's story on AI at DJI

Jos works as a Service Manager at the Shared Service Center IT for the governmental organization in charge of all things in relation to the Justice Department. On June 16, 2014 he invited all managers from two different departments which were supposed to start working together, to join him in an AI summit. A total of sixteen people came.

The reason for bringing these people together was that in the beginning of 2014 the organization decided to ask two teams to work together and construct a new Working Agreement. Jos has used AI to look for best practices in both teams. The theme he chose for the AI Summit was: "Working together".

At the meeting both Discovery and Dream phase were used to create as much data as possible for Jos to analyze and help him construct an advice on how to create a new Work Agreement. The people present were asked to look for an interview partner, preferably someone they had not worked with yet, or at least someone they didn't know very well. They were asked to interview each other for a given time. They were also asked to keep notes from the interviews.

After the given time they were asked to divided themselves into three groups around a flip-over and share the stories from the interviews.

They were asked to create a provocative proposition. The following proposition was created: "Only a perfect co-creating team of people in both team Diensten Management and team Service Management will guarantee the existence of both DI and SSC-I (the organization)."

The three groups were asked to work on shared ideas that were either related to the cooperation, individual values, external implications, or the end-result. There were 70 shared ideas spread over the four groups in:

32 on cooperation

25 on individual values

5 on external implications

8 on end-result.

Jos analyzed these comments and wrote in his dissertation that he thought the best experience with working together as a team required good relations, and the space for people to work from their strengths in order to create a good working relationship.

I have created three mind-maps on the words that were used in the interviews in the groups to show the language that is used at this organization:

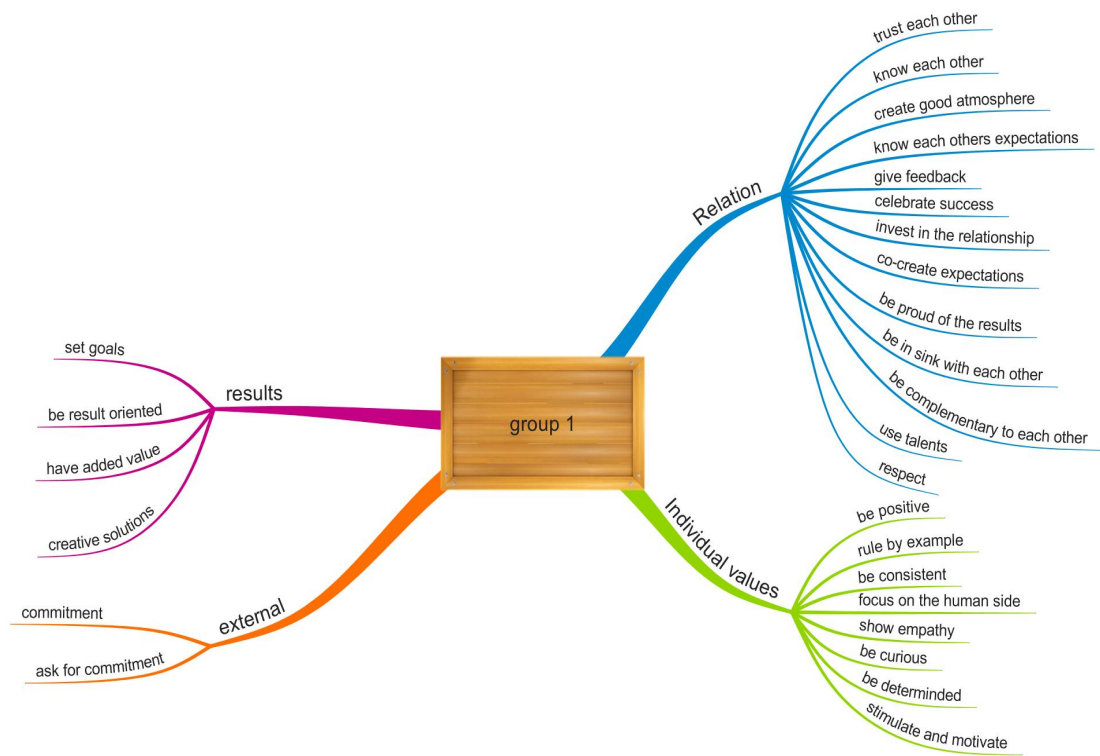
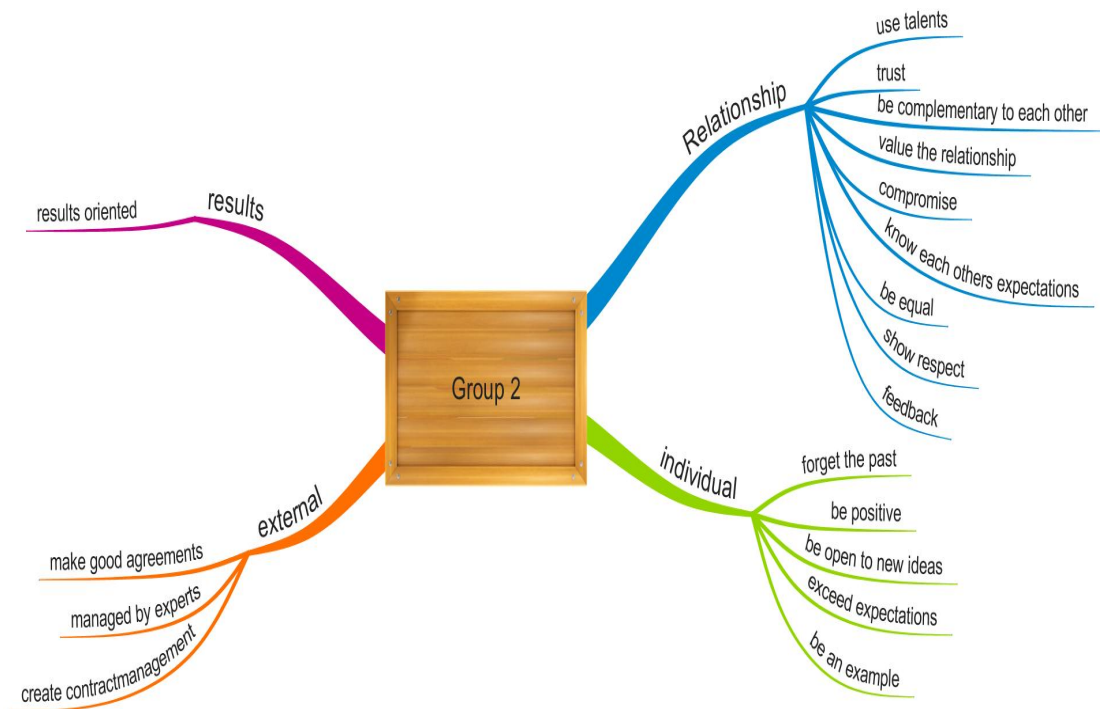


Figure 45: Mind-map Group 1 - DJI AI Summit



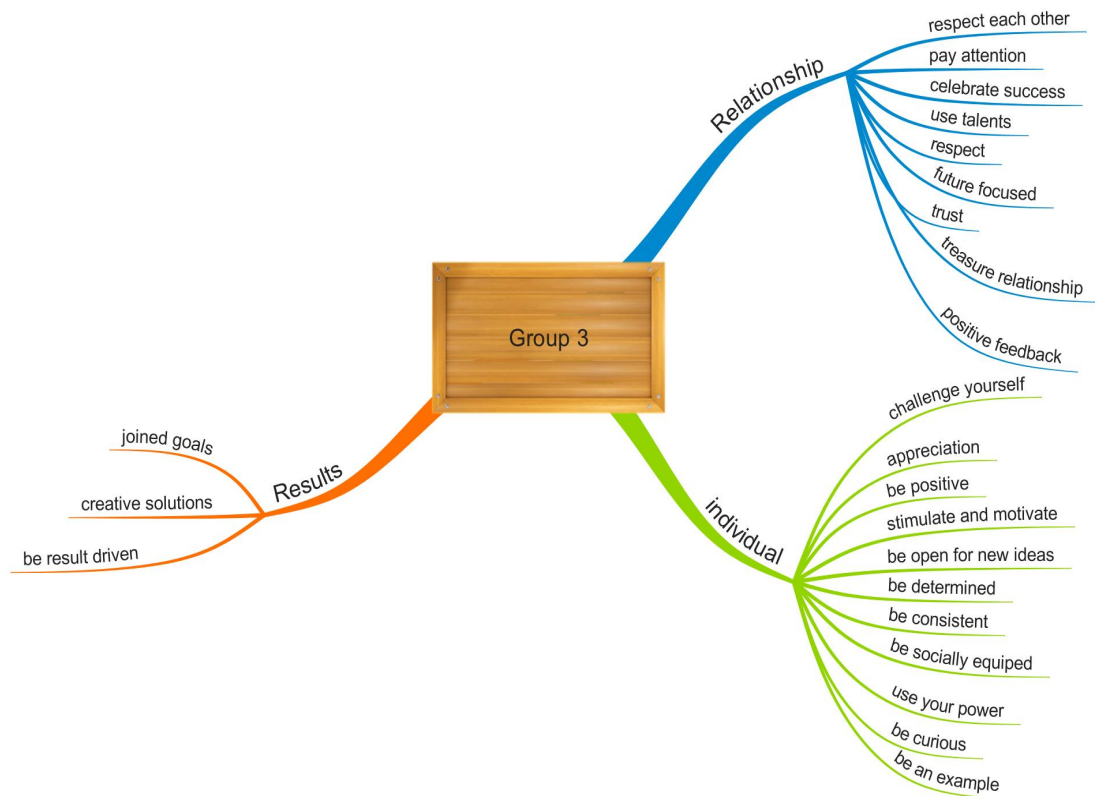


Figure 46: Mind-map group 2 + 3 DJI AI Summit

The groups were asked to create their own provocative proposition and these were presented:

Group 1: On your own you go fast, but together you go further.

Group 2: A good start is half the work; why have we not started yet?

Group 3: We are THE example of V&J service.

I have not included the rest of Jos' research project as it is out of scope for this research.



## Edwin Groenenberg's story on AI at University of Tilburg

Here is Edwin's story on how he used AI in his Bachelor thesis

I am the senior system administrator and process-manager system administration at ICT-TiSEM. ICT-TiSEM is the internal ICT service provider for the Tilburg School of Economics and Management (TiSEM), which is part of the Tilburg University. For my Bachelor it was required to perform my research in the work-environment at TiSEM. Therefore I decided to take on one of the most pressing issues at ICT-TiSEM, which was the lack of a good ICT-strategy. ICT-TiSEM was starting to lag behind in keeping up with the needs of its customers for a couple of reasons:

- The needs of the customers had changed, because of university policy and new technologies.
- The number of services ICT-TiSEM provided had grown, but the number of staff maintaining these services remained the same.
- ICT-TiSEM experienced budget cuts, due to a decrease in government funding for Tilburg University. The School management team required all departments to be more efficient.

An ICT-strategy had to be formed for ICT-TiSEM to be able to deal with these factors. The main research topic was born:

*"Which strategy for ICT-TiSEM, in regards to the current situation and the most desired future, will suit ICT-TiSEM best according to its stakeholders?"*

The main topic automatically required the secondary questions, namely:

- *"What is the current situation of ICT-TiSEM?"*
- *"What is the most desired situation of ICT-TiSEM?"*
- *"How can ICT-TiSEM change to achieve the most desired situation?"*

At first the analysis of the current situation en the analysis of the most desired situation were based on the classical model of the design-school (Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, & Lampel, 2011). My supervisor introduced me to Appreciative Inquiry during our first meeting. I got intrigued by this (to me) new method and decided to use it in my thesis. The primary reason I chose to go for AI was because I wanted to use the knowledge my colleagues had (due to their experience and insights) which was a contrast to the "numbers" and documents one uses with a method such as the design-school. To make it interesting I decided to try and match AI to the model of the design-school. The design-school was used to determine the current situation of ICT-TiSEM and AI was used to determine the desired situation of ICT-TiSEM.

### **About the AI process**

After the decision was made I started making plans with my supervisor on how to get things started with AI. I proposed to my manager that I wanted to use AI as a means to determine the most desired situation for ICT-TISEM. He was enthusiastic, as he also was aware of the problems at the office and welcomed help. So we planned an afternoon with the team (ten people). Together with my supervisor I prepared the interview-questions that were used during the first part of the so-called AI –summit. The people were paired up to interview one another according to an interview script. In that script a few rules were included on how to interview one another and the questions they should ask one another. The interviewer was tasked to get as much information as possible about a subject by inviting the interviewee to keep talking about details. We took about an hour to interview each other. After the interviews were done we formed two groups to discuss the results of the interviews in order to try and find out if we could find similarities in the things that had been said. The groups had to find the positive themes in the interviews, however some of the participants somehow could not get this positive mindset. Both groups were joined together, but still some persisted in looking for things that were wrong with ICT-TISEM, or if others found a positive theme they would focus on the impossibilities of the theme. I assume that in most AI-summits the positive mind set creates a sort of generative, positive and creative brainstorm or “brown paper session”, which guides itself and should go unsupervised in order to invite everyone to be as open and “generative” as possible and together find the positive themes. In a department where there (apparently) is a lot of dissatisfaction it seems you need more time to get to the positive side. Luckily I did manage to gather a lot of data from the interviews and the group discussion. In knowing what people do not want, there are certain clues to what they could want.



## 5. Delivering the future

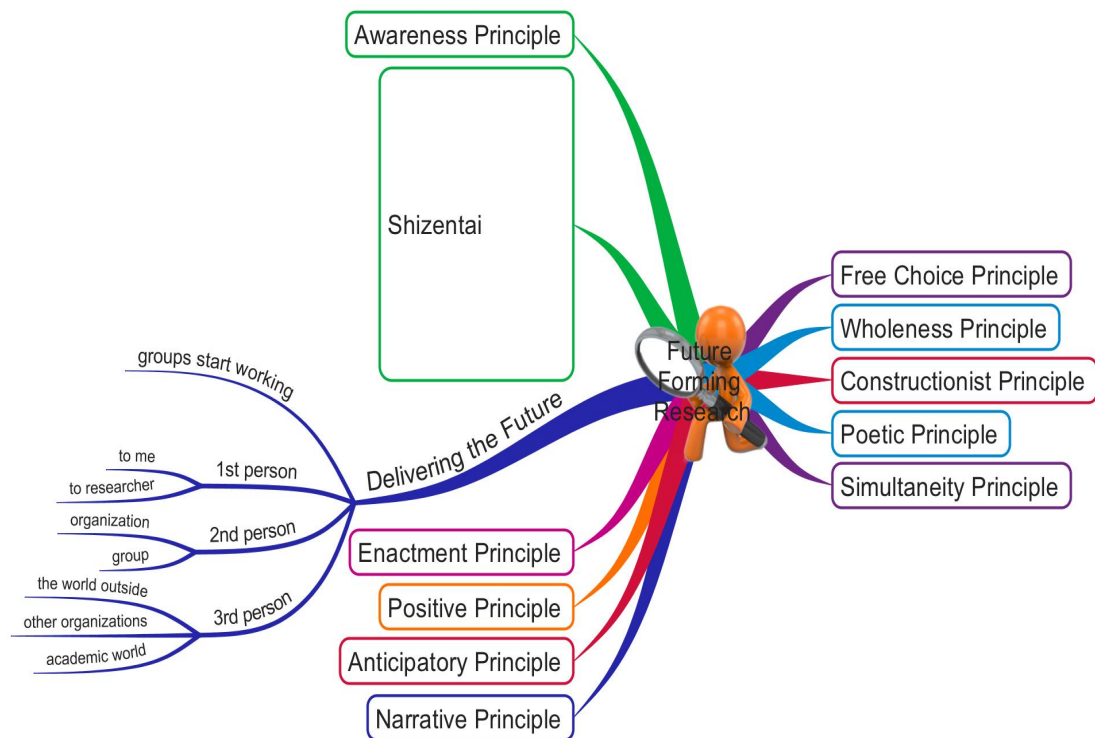


Figure 47: Delivering the Future

## Delivering the Future – The Conclusion Chapter

The Delivery phase is to identify how to empower, learn and improvise. It sustains what gives life. This is the place of continuous learning, adjustment, and improvisation (Cooperrider, et al. 2008, p.46).

In the Delivery phase we look at the results, and create initiatives and action plans. The research is done, and now is the time to look at how we can use the findings. This is the place where we embrace the re-framing. We know that human systems have a tendency to move in the direction of what they most frequently and deeply ask questions about.

The affirmative topic for this inquiry was:

### **Appreciative Inquiry makes Research Future Forming**

The following questions were answered in the research:

*What is Appreciative Inquiry?*

The first question to be answered was on what *Appreciative Inquiry* is. In the - Discovering the path- section a full description of the method is given, and many of the models that were developed worldwide are included. In traditional orientation to research this would be called the literature review. In this future forming direction of research it is called -discovering the path-.

*How can Appreciative Inquiry help form a future forming orientation to research?*

Based on Gergen's description of Research as Creative Construction in this research, in the -Discovering the path- section the various directions for organizations, through what is called the 'new wave' in organizational development, and higher education is guiding the research in such a manner that in the -Designing the Future- section the NOVI case is shared where *Appreciative Inquiry* helped to create a vocabulary from which new practices can emerge. The NOVI case is used as an example from which other universities can be inspired. In the Netherlands, at this moment, the search for more opportunity for co-creation is seen in the start of the *New University* and *Rethink University of Amsterdam*.

*How can the new principle, Shizentai add value?*

In addition to the principles that form *Appreciative Inquiry* a new principle was added, the *Shizentai* principle that can help link the world of head and the world of feet.

*What is the impact of using Appreciative Inquiry on research?*

During the research 12 people were interviewed. These participants were all researchers that used *Appreciative Inquiry* in their own research. Their stories are shared in the -Dreaming the Future- section of the research. Five Ph.D.'s were asked to share their story on impact.

In this phase of the research I am showing what can be said about the impact of using Appreciative Inquiry as a research method for the individual researcher, the organization and research as future forming. I'm using the traditional distinction between first, second and third person (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010, as quoted by Zandee, 2013), describing in the first person research what has been the impact on the individual researcher of working with AI and what can help the individual researcher to look at the research, reflecting with an appreciative eye, what is often called '*spirit of inquiry*' (Zandee, 2013, p. 342).

## Delivering the future for the individual researcher

One way of looking at AI and how it can impact the individual, in this case the researcher is through self-reflection. The NOVI University of Applied Sciences has been looking for ways to include self-reflection in the process of research. Richardson uses reflexive writing as a form of inquiry (Richardson, 1994 as quoted by Simon in Simon & Chard, 2014, p.9) Part of the research project that Bachelor students go through is the self-reflection.

Cooperrider (2012) wrote about the tiniest AI summit there is: the one where there is not a room of 500 or more people, but only you. *“How can we take the principle of wholeness and actually design an AI Summit for breakthroughs or disruptive innovations for individual change?”* (Cooperrider, 2012, p.4).

I decided to use the steps Cooperrider took in this process to create a process for self-reflection. At this moment the self-reflection process at NOVI is not structured. Students write about self-reflection but are not guided on what should be in the document. I'll write about the steps that Cooperrider took in his tiniest AI summit, but through working with the students on this form I hope that in time a new reflection approach will arise at NOVI, which is then created by the students in co-creation.

“Reflexivity is also a form of self-supervision driven by a desire to coordinate with others in an ethical manner:

- What choices I am making and with what possible consequences for me, for them, for others not present?
- What is informing those choices?
- What other choices am I overlooking?
- Where are those guiding values / prejudices coming from?” (Simon in Simon & Chard, 2014, p. 21).

Cooperrider takes 7 steps (Cooperrider, 2012, p.6) from which I have created this mind-map:

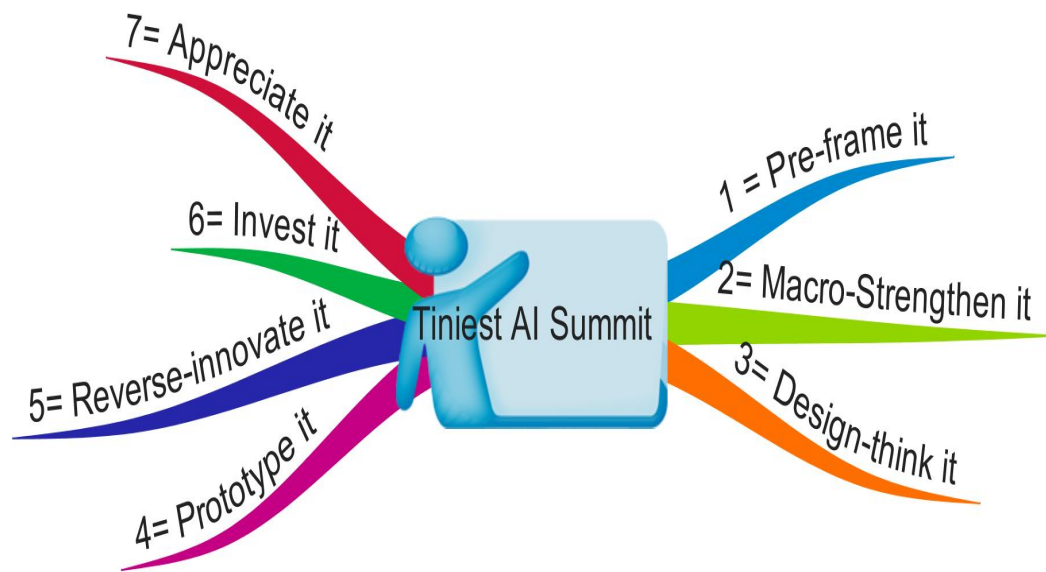


Figure 48: Mind-map Tiniest AI Summit (Cooperrider, 2012)

I have translated the steps to make them suitable for a self-reflection for students at their research process at the end of the Bachelor education.

In the **first** step '**pre-frame it**' the topic choice is made by positively reframing the topic of the paper, or the research. Many of the students look at their research as a problem to be solved, but in order to make it an Appreciative Inquiry we need a topic that will "*ignite the genuine state of appreciation, spirit of inquiry or not-knowing, and curiosity*" (Cooperrider, 2012, p. 8).

So instead of looking at the research as a difficult road to travel, one can look at the inquiry as a path to the unknown, with an open mind, curiosity and the capacity to observe, describe, be aware and be appreciative. It can be a life changing experience. The researcher is asked to reframe their inquiry.

There are a few questions that we can ask to help the student pre-frame the study: Take a look at your research topic and imagine what it would mean to do research not from a point of view to solve a problem, but from a point of view where our path of inquiry leads us to in our quest to strength. What would it mean to have more of the strengths in your organization? Or what would it mean to have more of your strengths in your work?

The **second** step is called '**macro-strengthen it**' and is to help discover who are surrounding you to help you discover the strengths that are in the organization. The following question can guide this step:

*"If I were to assemble a set of stakeholders to engage in my personal summit on ..... (The theme of the research) – and if there were no constraints of any kind whatsoever, what configuration of strengths, knowledge resources and relationships would make the difference?"*  
(Cooperrider, 2012, p.9)

This is the place where students are asked to look at who can be engaged to work in the research project. They are asked to look outside of the box by including not only the people in the organization, but also look outside of the organization. Other questions that can help to map out the second step is for the student to ask:

*"When in your life have you been the best researcher – at your own highest point of research? What were the insights and the kind of truths you would want to pass on to every child or grandchild? And, how many people will you share these insights with, starting today?"* (Reframed for research, Cooperrider, 2012, p. 11)

The **third** step in this tiniest AI summit is about '**Design-think it**'. In this phase the researcher is asked to look into his own mind and craft his own brainstorm into the "how might we" question: "How might we create an approach to .... (Theme of the research), that is easy, and powerful and helps the organization to flourish".

The **fourth** step is on '**Prototype it**'. The Design phase in AI is asking for more than propositions. It invites us to take our words and concepts into visual form. (Cooperrider, 2012) At NHTV's Imagineering Masters the students are asked to create an artefact while doing their Master research. This allows students to make concepts come alive visually and experientially. This is something I will be proposing to NOVI as well. In this fourth step the student is asked to create a vision on his research, but we ask him to Prototype it, to make it come alive visually. Cooperrider, in his tiniest AI Summit described how he designed his ideal kitchen with books, his VitaMix machine a mind-map of all his nutritional excellence "a-has" and a storyboard for his pilot test's first six-week immersion. Working with mind-maps is one way of helping to visualize the research.

The **fifth** step is to '**Reverse-innovate it**'. In each of the research classes held at NOVI we tell students to keep a research diary of observations. Through keeping a diary it becomes so much easier to reverse innovate. *"A learning organization is able to reverse innovate, that is, peer into a single innovation, step backwards in reverse sequence and learn from it"* (Cooperrider, 2012, p. 16).

Through keeping a journal the student can look back at the learning process which was created. The reverse innovation of progress moments helps to see subtle changes that could have been easily glossed over.

The **sixth** step is to '**Invest it**'. At this point we look at how the research can be framed and leveraged to help surface new, unexpected sources of value. The student is invited to create questions, and answers like: If I'm likely to create new ways of working in this area of my work. What would that mean for other areas? If I get these two departments to work together faster, what would that mean for other departments? And so on. *"This exercise of looking ahead is what I call anticipatory measurement and invites investing the gains to promote more gain"* Cooperrider, 2012, p. 18).

The **last** step is on '**appreciating it**'. The student is asked to look at what he appreciates most about his research. What words come to mind? *"It is not about how large your summit is or how tiny. The question is: Does it make you feel like doing more of it?"* (Cooperrider, 2012, p.20)

I have send out the questionnaire below to some of the students who have already finished their studies and asked them to answer the questions as a self-reflection. Not all of these students have used AI in their research. The answers I got back are shared in attachment B. I have included my own self-reflection on this research following the questionnaire.

### Self-reflection questionnaire

Please answer the questions stated below, with in mind your research project at NOVI University of Applied Science.

1. Please describe your research project in a few lines, adding your name and job title.
2. Take a look at your research topic and imagine what it would mean to do research not from a point of view to solve a problem, but from a point of view where our path of inquiry leads us to in our quest to strength. What would it mean to have more of the strengths in your organization? Or what would it mean to have more of your strengths in your work?
3. If I were to assemble a set of stakeholders to engage in my personal summit on (theme of the research) – and if there were no constraints of any kind whatsoever, what configuration of strengths, knowledge resources and relationships would make the difference?
4. Please make a list or a mind-map to show what your have done, or would do and explain the difference (if there is).
5. When in your life have you been the best researcher – at your own highest point of research? What were the insights and the kind of truths you would want to pass on to every child or grandchild? And, how many people will you share these insights with, starting today?
6. How might we create an approach to .... (theme of the research), that is easy, and powerful and helps the organization to flourish.
7. How would you visualize the outcome of your research? You can either draw a mind-map, you can create a storyboard, or any other creative outcome.
8. Please refer back to your research journal and show what you have learned during the process of research. Think back on the important decisions you have had to make and share your learning.
9. Please create questions like: If I'm likely to create new ways of working in this area of my work. What would that mean for other areas? If I get these two departments to work together faster, what would that mean for other departments? And answer them in this part of your self-reflection document.
10. Please look at what it is that you appreciate most about your research. What words come to mind?

Here is my own self-reflection on this research:

*I have filled in the self-reflection questionnaire while being in a state of Shizentai.*

1. I have not looked at my research from a point of view to solve a problem, I've been curious to see what impact using AI would have on research. I've been curious to see how AI can help research to become future forming. I think that working with research that is future forming allows more creativity and innovation to organizations and therefor will be of added value.



2. If there were no constraints I would have brought all researchers who I worked with in one room. I would have worked with them for a week or more on the research, and at the beginning of the time spend I would have asked some of my *aikido* family to be there and help teach the practice of *Shizentai* to the researchers. This would be wonderful, because it would allow me to translate the practice of *Shizentai* into the professional landscape by looking at how the translations would be done by the professionals. I would have loved to include more AI practioners to the group. It is only now; at the end of this research I realize the importance of combining the two worlds AI and *aikido*, which would create the word AI Ki Do.

3. I've not answered this question, since the research has been done from a future forming point of view, using AI.

4. I've been the best researcher during my *aikido* study. It has been remarkable to look at this *aikido* study from a point of view of a researcher. In *aikido*, when I was not in *Shizentai*, the attack of the opponent would hit me hard and through that I learned to do things differently. In 'real' live that would not always be so clear. Sometimes I would keep 'trying'. I've been in jobs where, now in retrospect, I was not in *Shizentai*. I was too focused on one small detail and by doing so I was unable to keep an open mind, or experience *Shizentai*. I will share these insights with as many people as possible, through working with my *aikido*-family at the BedrijfsAikido group. I will share these insights during my research classes at NOVI and other universities that I will work for. I will create workshops to teach *Shizentai* to people.

5. I think that working with AI, as a research method will help research to be future forming. I would also include a workshop in *Shizentai* to help people to be in the state of open mindedness, awareness, curiosity, and calmness.

6.

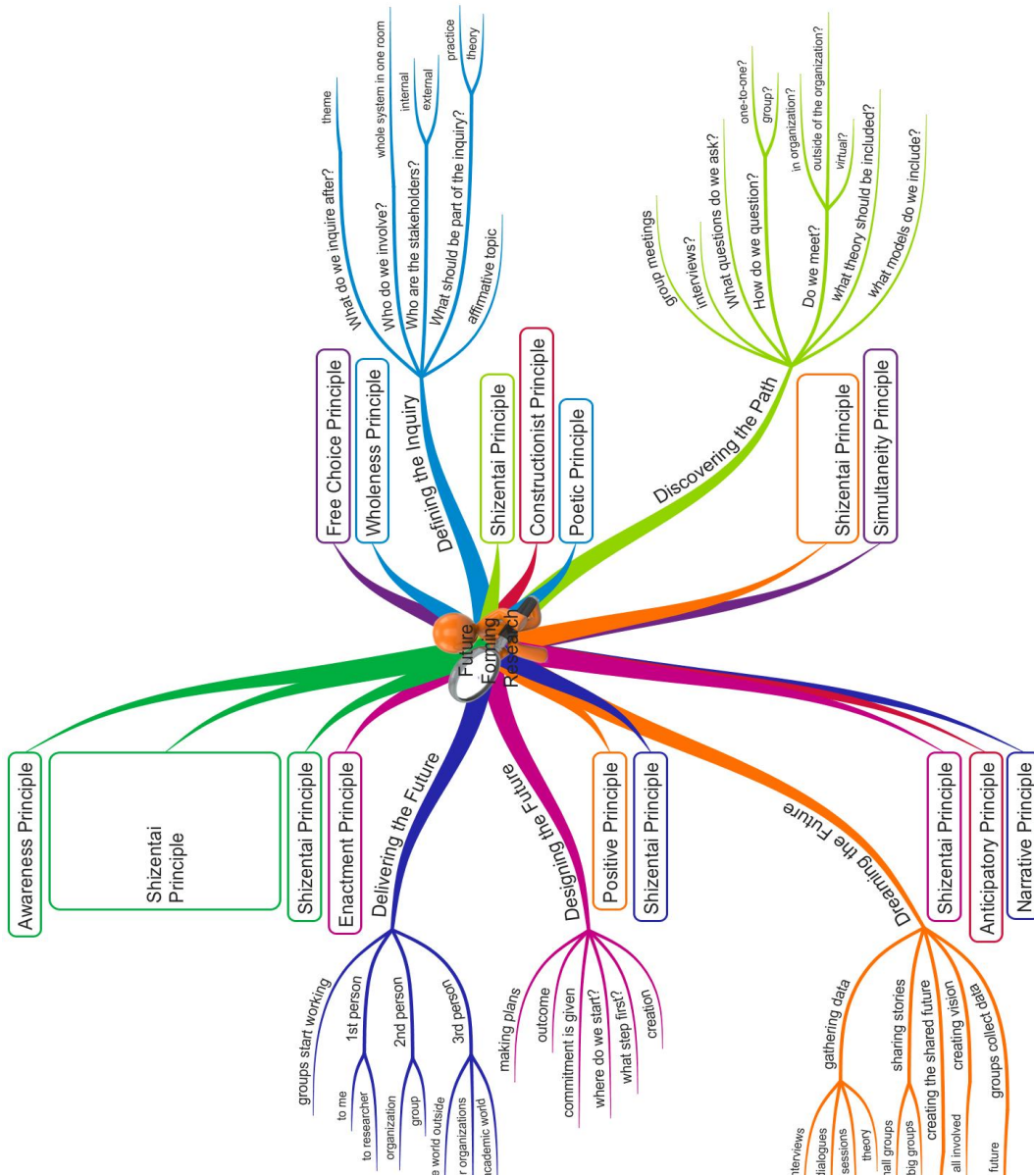


Figure 49: Mind-map creative outcome

7. A while ago I wanted my research to be about AI and *Aikido*. But looking back, I now know I was focusing too much on details. I was unable to explain what I wanted. During the process of research, while focusing on a much broader view of what the impact was of working with AI and how we can make research future forming, all of a sudden there was the state of not-knowing. I remember talking to John (Dr. John Rijsman) and telling him about how I was always in this state of not knowing, and being curious. All of a sudden it hit me that this was *Shizentai*, and there was the opportunity to include *aikido*. Looking back at the complete process of doing this Ph.D. research, – the process of research – it is making sense now.

8. The question I would like to create would be: what would it be like if we could have future forming research as the best choice for students to work with at NOVI? I can see how the researches done at the Bachelor study will become more creative. I dream about how, then, the research project reports are no longer thrown in the desk, without reading, but I dream about how the students are valued for their work, because it is now a co-creation with all stakeholders. Their reports are shared with all employees in the organization and they are asked to continue working along the lines of their future forming research. These lines would include using AI as a method of research and the practice of *Shizentai*.

9. The words I'd like to use to express my appreciation for my research are: creativity, future forming, impact, *Shizentai*, interesting, curiosity, working together, inquire together, sharing stories.

## Shizentai

Part of a self-reflection process is to look at ones own mental maps. How do you look at your research? What are the stories you create in your mind, the sense-making process, on the subject of your research? Do you already know the outcome of your research, before even starting? Or are you following the directions of your manager, who has a certain outcome of the research that would benefit him? One option of staying away from these stories is to go into the state of *Shizentai*. The state of *Shizentai* will help to be open minded, curious, aware and calm. It can help you bridge the world of head and the world of feet. The introduction of this state in the newest AI Principle is one of the outcomes of this research.

## Appreciative Eye

Some of the NOVI students asked me how they can develop an appreciative eye in their research and outside of the research. I think that using the 3-Step process developed by Jackie Kelm (2007) is helpful in the process.

A reminder of the Appreciative Living process developed by Jackie Kelm is given through sharing the picture she created:

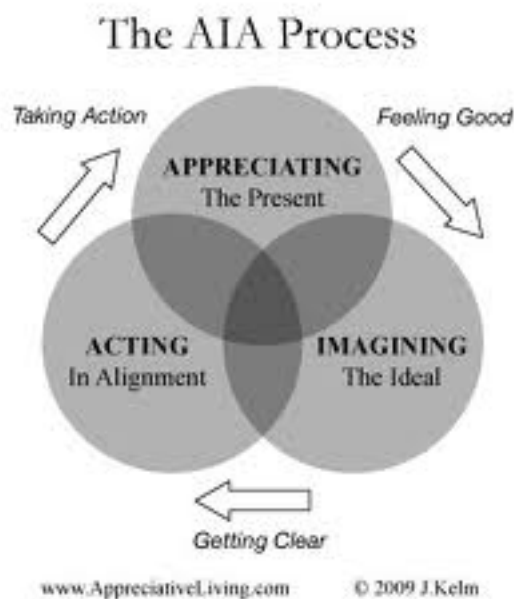
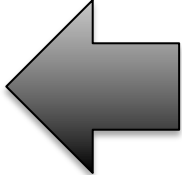


Figure 50: Appreciative Living process, Kelm (2009)

The 3-step process looks like this:

Table 11: Using the Appreciative Living 3-Step Process, Kelm (2007)

Step	Effect	Remember	Ask Yourself	Do
<b>Appreciating</b> The Present	Feeling Good	Focus on what you want <b>more</b> of, not less of	What good can I find? What do I want more of?	List what you are grateful for
<b>Imagining</b> the Ideal	Getting Clear	Your only limits are your beliefs of what's possible	What do I want in the future? What do I believe is possible & how can I see beyond this?	Imagine the Ideal Experience
<b>Acting</b> in Alignment	Acting Now	The only thing you control is your thinking	What one thing can I do, no matter how small, to move me in the direction of what I want?	Answer this Question 

Kelm introduces an exercise called *Gratitude Journal*. That shift in automatic thinking changes the focus so that one notices the good. She asks you to write at least three things you are grateful for each day in a notebook. It can be done once a day, and should be something different each time. The principles that are 'triggered' here are the Poetic Principle and the Positive Principle. (Kelm, 2009, p. 12) The activity of keeping a Gratitude Journal helps to find what we want more of, and it teaches us that it is good to feel good. Kelm has created ten exercises that can help using the AIA process in depth. I ask questions to determine what exercise fits best with the student.

## Delivering the future - for the organization.

In the second person action, research talks about what we inquire together. With the researchers the group of people that were interviewed and we delved into the question 'what is the impact on research of working with AI' and we asked ourselves 'How can AI as a research method help organizations?' I have looked at a possible next step for the NOVI organization, showing how the creation of democratization in higher education can be key to innovation. In operationalization this means that I'm introducing AI so that it has a solid role in the Research Module for NOVI.

At a meeting on November 10, 2014 I was introduced to the approach used at the NHTV University's Imagineering Master in what is now called the Performatory. The Performatory is a place where Movement Happens. In a booklet that was created in 2013 the Performatory group says:

*It's crazy to talk about social innovation and then end the story with:*

*"There is a school..."*

*No, there is not. We created a place called Performatory and let's say we think that's a Social Innovation in education.*

*You can get a bachelor degree over there, so maybe it is, in fact, a school.*

*There are experts as well, or you can call them teachers. We meet up with experts, but there are no lessons. Or are there? Lessons? We'd like to call them events and meetings (Performatory – Covers: Part 2, n.d.).*

In the Performatory are four groups: Experience Design -about designing meaningful experiences that create value for businesses, individuals and society-, Community Design -about creating value by bringing people and organizations together and facilitating the process of co-creation and shared responsibility for a positive result-, Inquiry Design -about doing research in a co-constructive way to collect knowledge on a topic and a way to stimulate positive change in a certain direction-, Leadership Design, -about taking the lead in your own development and in your environment. Who are you? Which role do you want to have in life and what do you want to move in the world-, Process Design -about designing and facilitating creative processes that lead to new ideas, co-creations and movements-.

The process, which is leading to movement, is started by a group of people who are involved at NHTV in social innovation. The group consists of teachers, students, former students and people from outside the school organization. Together they create the curriculum for the NHTV University.

I would like to use the process that took place at NHTV's Academy for Leisure as an example of what can be created at NOVI in a future forming research module.

The creation of a Performatory-like setting can be approached through the lens of an AI Summit. What is important is to realize is that in order to create this AI Summit, to create a Research Module like the Performatory, all stakeholders should be in 'one room'.

Here is an overview of the activities before, during and after the AI summit:

Table 12: Overview of activities (Ludema et al, 2003, p.28)

Before	During	After
Sponsoring the summit	Day 1: Discovery	Communicating outcomes
Forming a planning team	Day 2: Dream	Supporting innovation teams
Defining the summit task	Day 3: Design	AI Training
Selecting participants	Day 4: Delivery	Positive change network
Creating a summit design		Second-wave inquiry (and third, and forth and.....)

Regarding the subject of sponsoring the summit, Ludema et al confirms, *"Although the support of senior leaders is essential, no one person, function, or level within an organization can be the sole sponsor of an AI summit. A broader group is needed to enable the necessary participation, information and leadership"* (Ludema et al, 2003, p.29).

As an example of how an advisory team can be formed, Ludema et al talk about forming an advisory board that included leaders with diverse perspectives throughout a school district. They included the head of the teacher's union, the head of curriculum, a teacher, and a school principal.

Key activities for ensuring effective sponsorship:

- Gaining the support of sponsors
- Introducing the AI Summit process
- Forming an active advisory team
- Focusing the summit on a significant change agenda
- Clarifying advisory team roles
- Ensuring commitment to resources
- Communicating the importance of the summit
- Selecting a summit planning team. (Ludema et al, 2003, p.57)

At NHTV the advisory board included teachers, students, former-students and external advisors. For NOVI this can be a group formed from the same type of people.

One of the important things in starting a process where AI is used is to introduce AI to the group that will form the advisory team. Often not only they, but also the planning team that is to be formed are present in the AI introduction.

It is possible to introduce AI in a two-hour introduction. What is important in such an introduction is that the participants not only hear about the process but also experience some of its value.

An example of a two-hour introduction agenda would be:

1. Introduction to AI	20 minutes
a. What is AI? Definitions and Success Stories	
b. Deficit-Based Change vs. Positive Change	
c. Overview of the 4-D cycle	
2. Mini Appreciative Interviews	45 minutes
a. One-on-One Interviews (15 minutes each way)	
b. Debrief of the Interviews	
c. The Power of Positive Questions	
3. The AI Summit process	20 minutes
a. Small-Group vs. Whole-System Approaches	
b. Conditions for Success	
c. A Typical Four-Day Summit Agenda	
4. Open Discussion: How Might a Summit Benefit You?	20 minutes
5. Next Steps	15 minutes

(Ludema, et al, 2003, p.59)

At point 5, in the next steps, the advisory team and planning team are to be chosen. As with the Performatory example, it is important that in both teams there are not only employees from NOVI included in, but also students, former students and teachers should be included. With the cooperation of the Associate Professors who work for NOVI it would be possible to include some stakeholders from the IT market as well.

One of the tasks that the advisory team and planning team do together is to create a stakeholder map. On the stakeholder map, there can be teachers (who teach the research module), students, former-students, the four Associate Professors who are working for NOVI and part of the group from the NHTV Performatory. They have been working on their process, to create the Performatory, for over a year and NOVI can benefit from that knowledge and experience. I would love for the NOVI people to see what kind of space is created at NHTV, in order for them to use these ideas when talking to the landlord of the building NOVI is renting.

NOVI has expressed the wish to work more internationally. At NHTV there is already an international team working, so ideas on how to strengthen an international web of stakeholders can be shared during the planning team meeting. The planning team will start working on developing the AI Summit, which will lead to the Inquiry Design Performatory (Research Module) at NOVI.

There are certain regulations that need to be kept in mind when developing a new module for research, because of the accreditation that NOVI has for Bachelor education. This has been the same for the NHTV University. NHTV has been able to create a new curriculum, and a new way of working without losing



the accreditation. The rules and regulations for NOVI to keep the accreditation are out of scope for this research.

To make the AI summit into a success there are ten essential conditions:

1. A relevant, clear, and compelling task
2. An unconditional focus on the positive
3. Robust planning
4. The whole system in the room, the whole time
5. Commitment to support success of decisions and outcomes
6. A healthy physical and relational space
7. Minimal and mindful facilitation
8. Begin with appreciative interviews
9. Flow through the AI 5-D cycle
10. Create a narrative-rich environment (Ludema et al, 2003, p. 38)

During the meeting on November 10, 2014 I have asked about the roles that people take in the Performatory. It turns out that the students have a big role to play. They are the ones who create the context of the study. Because of their inquiry into what is needed, which is done through the help of teachers, they plan which books and articles to read, which videos to look at, but most of all, which conversations are to be held. This will help create the full curriculum. The role of the teacher is changing into the role of a facilitator. The facilitator role is of a person who helps the student to develop an inquiry on what is important on the subject. The facilitator can guide a student to look at the books and articles to be read, video's to watch. The facilitator can also be the speaker at one of the meetings, in order to share experiences. In this way of working, the teacher is no longer the one with the most influence on the teachings. Each student can bring his or her interest to the group for discussion. Something to remember is some of the students at the Performatory were introduced to social constructionism. It is important to start teaching this approach with AI as a working model at NOVI. Some of the conditions mentioned to create a successful AI Summit can be taken to help create a successful Inquiry Design Performatory at NOVI: The relevant and compelling task, the unconditional focus on the positive, robust planning, the whole system in one room – all the time, commitment to support success of decisions and outcomes, a healthy physical and relational space, and the creation of a narrative rich environment.

The next step is to create a space where students can influence the Inquiry Design Performatory at NOVI, or the research module. The advisory board and the planning team will maintain a role of looking at how the students, former students, teachers and external advisors create a research module.

One of the items I would like to add to the research module as a facilitator is to teach the students how AI can be used for research. Of course the group will decide what should be included in the curriculum of the module. For the purpose

of this research I will include the steps to be taken in a research approach that is future forming in the next chapter.

## Delivering the future for future forming research

Research in the third person is about development and communication of knowledge that is also available to others and has value for others. Here I would like to look at how using AI as a research method can make research future forming. I would like to see this chapter as writing about the creation of theoretical context for an approach rather than a form of method. Because I feel that in working with AI, we as co-creators are forming, performing and re-performing in the processes or inquiry that we face on a daily base. Lewin (1946) *“created a shift from research to produce academic knowledge towards practice based research that could promote change”* (Chard in Simon & Chard, 2014, p. 46).

At the heart of the process of action-research Lewin described, *“there is a cycle of having an idea, exploring the idea, planning an action, taking action, evaluating the action, amending the plan and so on.”* (Chard, 2011 as quoted by Chard in Simon & Chard, 2014, p. 46) This cycle is reflected in AI’s phases Discovery (having an idea), Dream (exploring the idea), Design (planning an action) and Delivery (taking action). The evaluation of action is right back in the Discovery phase, while amending the plan falls into the Discovery phase too, with new opportunities to interview researchers on what can be added to create a shared (dreamed) future. This cycle gives room to stakeholders to look at the future from a shared perspective of how it can be. An example of how to use evaluation in AI is shared in the –Discovering the path- section, together with the example of the BedrijfsAikido group. We know that through sharing of stories, many voices are heard and people will feel committed to the research outcome. The impact of working with AI as a method of research on both the researchers and the organizations involved is inspiring. And perhaps, when the researcher can be in a state of *Shizentai*, then research can become future forming.

I have created the following mind-map, in which the process of future forming research is shared:

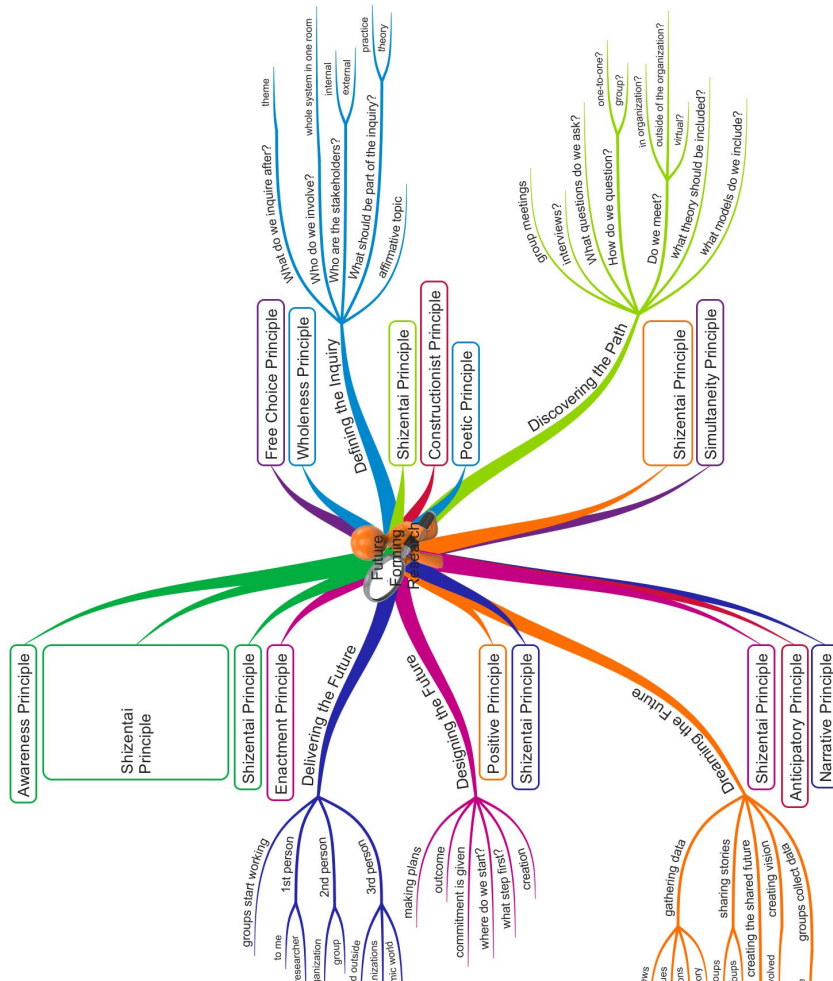


Figure 51: Future Forming Research Mind-map

AI in itself can't make research future forming. It is not enough to say that by using the phases, and particularly the Dream phase, it should be enough. AI can help to make research future forming through the use of all principles available, including the new Shizentai Principle. Through these principles we, as researchers, can let the inquiry grow into a future forming research. Let's start with being in a state of *Shizentai*.

An important step to take is to -Define the Inquiry- and answer the questions on choosing a theme, discovering who to involve and thinking about what methods and models to include. All of these are inviting the Constructionist Principle in. If we are aware that reality and identity are co-created, and we see things as we are, then we realize that through our interconnectedness we create new realities while being curious about the local truth. If we are aware that the words we use are important, because they create worlds, then the decision about who to involve in the inquiry becomes the most important one. Immediately from that decision onwards, it becomes clear that finding the best questions to ask is only to be done through co-creation of the whole group of stakeholders in one room. As a group we decide what we want to focus on. So for example when NOVI students have made their first decision to choose the stakeholders, they can then ask this group to be involved in the preparations for the second phase, which is Discovering the Path. This is also a good time to check if we are all still in a state of *Shizentai* by trying the practice shared in the -Discovering the Path- section.

To take the step of -Discovering the Path-, the group will be looking at what literature should be included (literature review), methods to include, what models to use, what questions to ask, what kind of interviews to do (methodology). All this is now a group decision, with the researcher being the one to facilitate the inquiry. The researcher is aware of the importance of the decisions of the group on what to focus on (the Poetic Principle), and invites the group to find what they want more of. If necessary, the researcher can facilitate a workshop to help the researchers in developing an appreciative eye (the Poetic Principle). Through the decision of what questions to ask, and who to involve in the interviews or group meetings a possibility is created for a bigger group to get involved and start sharing stories. In using the Narrative Principle, in an organization the language or words we use are changing. Through choosing different words, we create big change (the Anticipatory Principle). Through finding who has what strength, in the stakeholder's group, we start to realize that we are interconnected. Working together in a research, by using people in areas of where they have their biggest strength we are creating a vision for the organization (the Anticipatory Principle). This is again a good moment to check if we're all still in a state of *Shizentai*.

When we are ready to move on to the sharing of stories that were gathered in the -Discovering the Path- phase, we enter the -Dreaming the Future- phase. The Narrative Principle is fully available here, with the realization that sharing stories is transformative. When we realize that through these stories we are constructing our lives, the Awareness Principle is kicking in. We should be aware that big change begins in a small way, by asking people to change the words they use. We have all built a believe system that is kept alive as long as we chose to keep it alive. The Enactment Principle is inviting us to give it a try and to see what happens next. Make sure you're in a state of *Shizentai* the moment you try this!

In the -Dreaming the Future- phase it is important to try and find as many ways as possible to share stories. In many of the IT organizations that the students of NOVI work at we see that people are getting tired of the questionnaires that are send around for them to answer. So if that is the case, it is important to come up with something new and different. Both Jos Heesen and Edwin Groenenberg had the courage to try something different and started an AI Summit. They got such different answers to their questions. Yet, there is still much room for improvement to make the research even more future forming. If the people who were present at the AI Summit were involved in the creation of the questions that would have changed things because change starts at the moment we create different questions.

When we ask all stakeholders to share their stories and from these stories create provocative outcomes, one-liners or stories which started the creation of new visions, that would be the start of future forming research. We have created a shared dream. The way of working could be as creative as possible for the group. In groups where people work in IT I can imagine that this involves Internet and computers, more than drawing pictures and making mood-boards. Whatever it is necessary, we need to keep people in a state of *Shizentai*.

From the creation of this shared dream we can invite the stakeholders to go into the phase of -Designing the Future-. This is a good moment to check if we're still in a state of *Shizentai*.

In -Designing the Future- it is time to look at what we do to create the dreamed future. Who is taking what tasks? What can we do to make sure that the created dream is becoming a new reality? Were we able to develop a sense of wonder in the organization (the Simultaneity Principle)? Were we able to discover what we want more of? Are we still aware of the words we use create worlds? Are we still in a state of *Shizentai*? This is the phase in which action plans are made and commitment is given by all who want to be involved.

In the -Delivering the Future- phase we check if we're still in a state of *Shizentai* and from there we start to work on making sure the action plans are taken into reality. It is time to do some self-reflection using the tiniest AI summit

questionnaire and use the exercises given by Kelm (2009) to create an appreciative eye. In this phase, we look at what the research outcome can bring to the organization or group. Has there been enough awareness to the whole group? Are there new things which arise that are important to focus on? Do we need a new inquiry theme for a next round of phases, and perhaps with new stakeholders? Do we want to write an article about the research at hand and share it with the rest of the world so that they can become part of the group? Answering these questions give room for new research. As with the Lewin (1946) cycle, after the -Delivering the Future- phase, there should be room for evaluation, which in AI would be validation. This will bring new amendments to the research, creating a new cycle of Future Forming Research.

As a teacher or lecturer, there is a new role to play. It is important to keep in mind that the creation of democratization in higher education can be key to innovation. So working together with all stakeholders (in one room) can be an innovative way of working.

**I wish for the world that our words change, so that our realities change.**

**And I wish for these words to be generative, inspiring ones.**

**May your inspiring images create inspiring futures.**

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## **Attachement A. History of NOVI, NHTV and TAOS.**

Below is a short history of both NOVI and NHTV. These are the universities where most of the students that were interviewed in this research carried out their studies and research. The researchers that used AI in their Ph.D. studies were contacted through the TAOS institute's website.

### **History of NOVI University of applied sciences**

NOVI was formed in 1958, as the Dutch Center of Study for Administrative Automation (SSAA). It was founded by a number of professors; amongst them was Prof. Dr. Max Euwe. The professors were of the opinion that education in the area of Information Technology was needed. This was during the very early days of IT, and there were no laptops or personal computers available. At that time there was no formal education in that field. In 1970 the SSAA was renamed into the Stichting (non-profit institute) Dutch Center of Studies for Information (SSI). Through this organization seminars, courses and training were organized. Two magazines were also introduced and it is there where NOVI was started. In 1971 the two separated and continued on their own.

The most important education that was introduced there was AMBI: Automation and Mechanical Information Dispatch. The SSAA was the first to gain official recognition for delivering the study of AMBI and was allowed to conduct exams. For a long time this was the only education in IT.

#### **NOVI University of applied sciences**

In 1997 NOVI was officially started as a university of applied sciences. The university took it upon itself to help people that finished their AMBI to further their education to a formal Bachelor's degree. NOVI was accredited by the NVAO for both IT and Business Administration. In 2012 NOVI was the first non-governmental institute that appointed a lector, being Prof. lec.Dr.Ing. Hans Mulder Msc.BA.

In 2013 NOVI received accreditations for Business Administration (3<sup>rd</sup> time) and ICT (4<sup>th</sup> time). ([www.novi.nl](http://www.novi.nl) - viewed May, 2014)

### **NHTV Breda**

NHTV Breda is a university of applied sciences with a strong international focus. The institute caters for more than 7,000 students from over 50 countries. It is situated in the south of the Netherlands, in the city of Breda, only 100 km from both Amsterdam and Brussels. NHTV was founded in 1966 as an institute offering management programs in tourism and leisure and it remains the largest

and leading educational institution in this field in the world. Today NHTV offers professional and academic bachelor's and master's programs in the fields of:

Games & Media

Hotel

Facilities

Logistics

Traffic

Tourism & Leisure

Nearly all NHTV's study programs rank first in their categories in the national rankings. International accreditations from, for instance, the UN World Tourism Organization and the World Leisure Organization, underline the quality of the education. All study programs cover some focus areas, which are unique to NHTV. These focus areas are cross-cultural understanding, social responsibility, imagineering and entrepreneurship.

### **International setting**

From the outset, NHTV has always had a strong international outlook. Most of the bachelor's programs and all master's programs are taught in English. Almost 50% of all students are attending these English-taught programs. The institute also has an international teaching staff, and nearly 13% of the total student population is from abroad. NHTV set up the 'international classroom', a teaching method in which students from different cultures work together. Students are encouraged to do work placements abroad or at companies with a strong international focus. International business, cooperation and co-creation are key elements in NHTV's curriculum, both from a social and cultural perspective and from an economic point of view. ([www.nhtv.nl](http://www.nhtv.nl) - viewed May 10, 2014).

## **TAOS institute**

"The Taos Institute is a community of scholars and practitioners concerned with the social processes essential for the construction of reason, knowledge, and human value. We are a non-profit (501 c3) organization committed to exploring, developing and disseminating ideas and practices that promote creative, appreciative and collaborative processes in families, communities and organizations around the world. We achieve our educational ends through conferences, workshops, publications, a PhD program, a distance-learning program, newsletters, and web-based offerings. We work at the interface between the scholarly community and societal practitioners from communities of mental health, social work, counseling, organizational change, education, community building, gerontology and medicine. We develop and explore the ways in which scholarly research can enrich professional practices, and

practices can stimulate scholarly inquiry". ([www.taosinstitute.net](http://www.taosinstitute.net) - viewed May 29, 2014)



## Attachment B. Self-reflection forms by students at NOVI

### Self-reflection questionnaire

Please answer the questions stated below, with in mind your research project at NOVI University of Applied Science.

Please describe your research project in a few lines, adding your name and job title.

*Het onderzoek beschrijft alle gevolgen binnen de ICT afdeling ten gevolgen van de invoering van een nieuw programma van eisen vanuit de business.*

*Michel Roos. Technisch beheerder bij VvAA ICT*

Take a look at your research topic and imagine what it would mean to do research not from a point of view to solve a problem, but from a point of view where our path of inquiry leads us to in our quest to strength. What would it mean to have more of the strengths in your organization? Or what would it mean to have more of your strengths in your work?

*Mijn verwachting is als we AI toepassen op deze case dat de oplossingen de oplossing kleiner zou zijn dat het gehele traject welke nu opgezet wordt om het probleem op te lossen.*

If I were to assemble a set of stakeholders to engage in my personal summit on ..... (Theme of the research) – and if there were no constraints of any kind whatsoever, what configuration of strengths, knowledge resources and relationships would make the difference?

Please make a list or a mind-map to show what your have done, or would do and explain the difference (if there is).

*Het verschil zou zijn dan ik mijn netwerk aan kennis zou inschakelen om deze problemen te benoemen en op te lossen. Een beperkt team met voldoende kennis om alle zaken af te dekken die nodig zijn voor een geode oplossing van het probleem.*

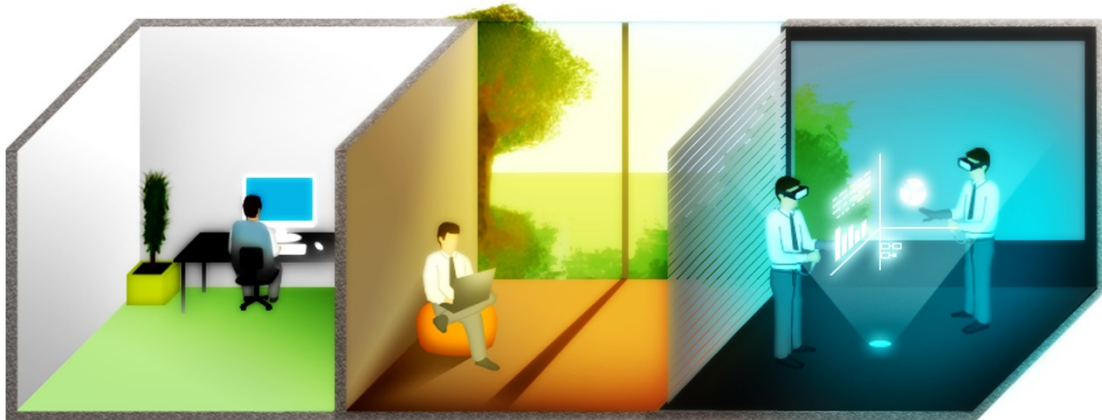
When in your life have you been the best researcher – at your own highest point of research? What were the insights and the kind of truths you would want to pass on to every child or grandchild? And, how many people will you share these insights with, starting today?

*Dat is op dit moment met opgroeiende kinderen. Door dingen anders te doen leren ze zelf ervaren en ontdekken waardoor de kinderen weer leren. Zelf dingen uitvinden, uit elkaar halen vinden ze leuk en leren hierdoor. Het delen is alleen met familie en vrienden.*

How might we create an approach to .... (theme of the research), that is easy, and powerful and helps the organization to flourish.

*Mensen in het proces betrekken en ze verantwoording geven over het gedeelte waar ze betrokken in zijn.*

How would you visualize the outcome of your research? You can either draw a mind-map; you can create a storyboard, or any other creative outcome.



*Op welke plek waar dan ook altijd dezelfde informatie (beveiligd) kunnen raadplegen.*

Please refer back to your research journal and show what you have learned during the process of research. Think back on the important decisions you have had to make and share your learning.

*Volledig vastleggen van de interviews was erg belangrijk omdat deze helemaal in het begin van het onderzoek zijn uitgevoerd.*

Please create questions like: If I'm likely to create new ways of working in this area of my work. What would that mean for other areas? If I get these two departments to work together faster, what would that mean for other departments? And answer them in this part of your self-reflection document.

*Als de aangedragen oplossing wordt doorgevoerd zou het dan wel werken?  
Worden daadwerkelijk alle wensen van de business van het onderzoek ook  
ingevuld?*

*Is het afnemen van een dienst nu echt de oplossing voor de toekomst en past deze  
bij de organisatie?*

*Is de organisatie wel echt toe aan deze vernieuwing van de infra structuur?*

Please look at what it is that you appreciate most about your research. What  
words come to mind?

*Op een aantal punten die benoemd zijn als aandachtspunten voor de uitvoering  
komen ook daadwerkelijk naar voren. De competenties van de medewerkers zijn  
niet passend bij de nieuwe indeling van de ICT organisatie is nu al gebleken.*

### Self-reflection questionnaire

Please answer the questions stated below, with in mind your research project at NOVI University of Applied Science.

Please describe your research project in a few lines, adding your name and job title.

*Compliance employee working at one of the largest global ICT organization.*

*My research project was about investigating an internal security/compliance company process called 'check now' used on in sourced customers. One of the in sourced customers a large banking organization did not performed very good under the process 'check now'. The research scoped especially on that customer and the research deliverables where in fact a Root Cause Analyze using different models and techniques plus at the end a conclusion with supplementary recommendations.*

Take a look at your research topic and imagine what it would mean to do research not from a point of view to solve a problem, but from a point of view where our path of inquiry leads us to in our quest to strength. What would it mean to have more of the strengths in your organization? Or what would it mean to have more of your strengths in your work?

*Unfortunately the organization where I work in is very centralized organized. Officially all employees are encouraged to come with new initiatives or ideas but when it comes concrete no budget is available spending some business hours to work things out. Starting the change of getting more strength in my work can be accomplished true my very small "circle of influence". Considering the hugeness and strong centralized steering of the organization would it be in my case not advisable.*

If I were to assemble a set of stakeholders to engage in my personal summit on ..... (Theme of the research) – and if there were no constraints of any kind whatsoever, what configuration of strengths, knowledge resources and relationships would make the difference?

Please make a list or a mind-map to show what your have done, or would do and explain the difference (if there is).

*Not applicable*

When in your life have you been the best researcher – at your own highest point of research? What were the insights and the kind of truths you would want to

pass on to every child or grandchild? And, how many people will you share these insights with, starting today?

*To be very honest, as I always pretend to be, my best research till now was my Bachelor research where discussing now. In my life before the Bachelor study I researched a lot in technically way. Mainly Root Cause Analyses after system disruptive or breakdowns. So these researches definitely cannot be challenged or compared to my finished Bachelor research. I do hope my highest point of research still will come and can share with anyone.*

How might we create an approach to .... (Theme of the research), that is easy, and powerful and helps the organization to flourish.

*The magic words are independency and honestly. In my personal situation the research I performed was fully in depended and showed surprising outcome not allowed to share in the organization because of the political factor. A lot of researches won't benefit if people being interviewed working in the same organization as where the research is being held. Simply the responders won't tell the whole story unless they are guaranteed not traceable in the research documentary. I would adore a new approach where the organization in subject and their responders are not feeling threatened and could speak freely even not in anonymous mode. Only in such way an organization can really benefit.*

How would you visualize the outcome of your research? You can either draw a mind-map, you can create a storyboard, or any other creative outcome.



Please refer back to your research journal and show what you have learned during the process of research. Think back on the important decisions you have had to make and share your learning.

*During my interviews with my carefully selected responders recording of the interviews was disliked so I had to write all feedback manually and fast on my pre-printed questionnaire forms. Doing it in this way the responders felt more sure to tell honestly their own storyline. I used the half open interview method. Most useful feedback appeared in the open part of the half open interview. Happily I could generalize most feedback I received in the open part because most responders told similar details. If my interview was not half open I missed the most important*

*information from my responders and my research outcome would certainly not be the same as now it is.*

Please create questions like: If I'm likely to create new ways of working in this area of my work. What would that mean for other areas? If I get these two departments to work together faster, what would that mean for other departments? And answer them in this part of your self-reflection document.

Not applicable

Please look at what it is that you appreciate most about your research. What words come to mind?

*Pride, shocked, curious, unbelief*

### **Self-reflection questionnaire**

Please answer the questions stated below, with in mind your research project at NOVI University of Applied Science.

Please describe your research project in a few lines, adding your name and job title.

*My name is Rob de Haan, I work as a functional maintainer at ABN AMRO Bank. In my research project I've researched the department Functional Maintenance Internet and Mobile, and specifically how the employees of that department can work together in the best way combined with product and department quality improvements.*

Take a look at your research topic and imagine what it would mean to do research not from a point of view to solve a problem, but from a point of view where our path of inquiry leads us to in our quest to strength. What would it mean to have more of the strengths in your organization? Or what would it mean to have more of your strengths in your work?

*In my research one of the advices is that the management should look at and use the strengths of the employees instead of looking at the missing capabilities of the employees. We always focus on what's going wrong instead of what's going fine. So in a way I've already used a little bit of using strengths.*

If I were to assemble a set of stakeholders to engage in my personal summit on ..... (Theme of the research) – and if there were no constraints of any kind whatsoever, what configuration of strengths, knowledge resources and relationships would make the difference?

Please make a list or a mind-map to show what you have done, or would do and explain the difference (if there is).

When in your life have you been the best researcher – at your own highest point of research? What were the insights and the kind of truths you would want to pass on to every child or grandchild? And, how many people will you share these insights with, starting today?

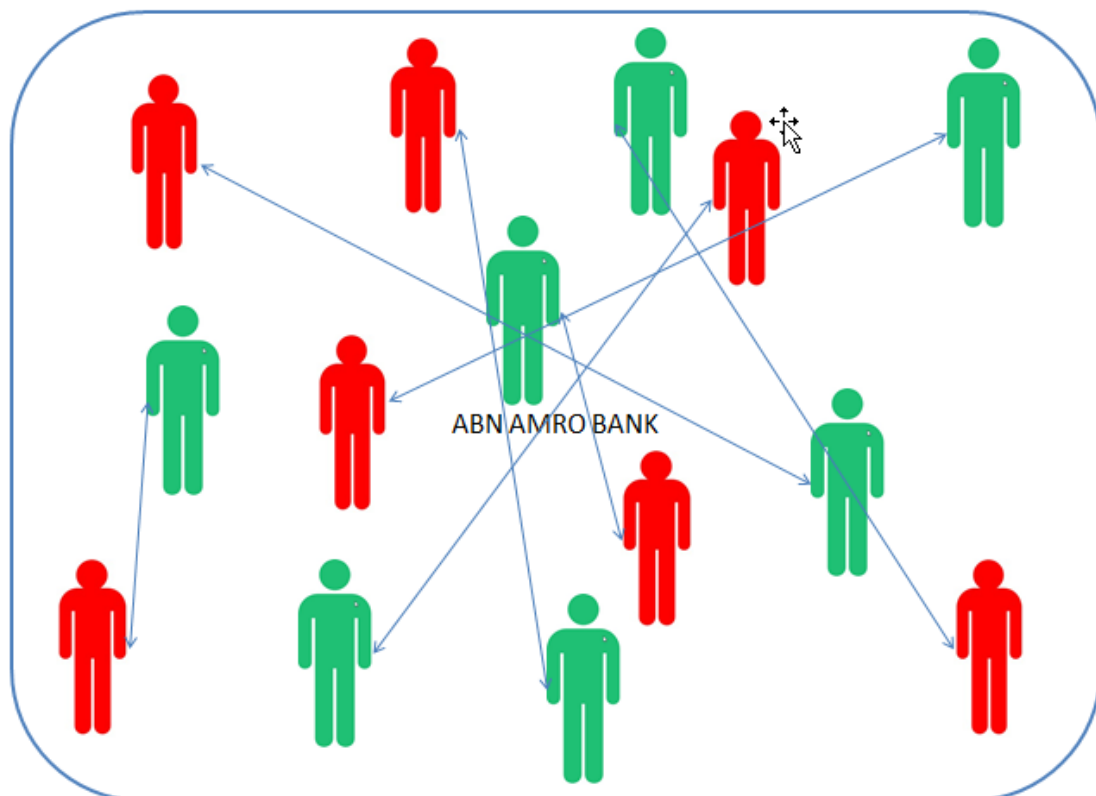
*Enjoy every moment of the day and your life, before you even can realize it its almost over!*

How might we create an approach to ... (Theme of the research), that is easy, and powerful and helps the organization to flourish.

*In the entire organization we must focus on the strengths of our employees. This combined with the possibility to switch jobs easy. So that the right person is placed on the right job.*

How would you visualize the outcome of your research? You can either draw a mind-map, you can create a storyboard, or any other creative outcome.

*I'm not that creative (sorry) but I tried to visualize the theory that every ABN AMRO employee is able to switch job, from the job he is not using his strengths to the job where he can use his strengths. (although this might be an utopia)*



Please refer back to your research journal and show what you have learned during the process of research. Think back on the important decisions you have had to make and share your learning.

Please create questions like: If I'm likely to create new ways of working in this area of my work. What would that mean for other areas? If I get these two departments to work together faster, what would that mean for other departments? And answer them in this part of your self-reflection document.

Please look at what it is that you appreciate most about your research. What words come to mind?

*Get to know colleagues and managers in another way than in a normal working relationship. This because you speak to them on a whole other level than in a normal conversation.*